Women writers, world problems, and the working poor, c. 1880-1920 : "blackleg' work in literature'

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Women Writers, World Problems, and the Working Poor, *c*. 1880–1920:

'"Blackleg" Work in Literature'

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Declaration

I, Flore Willemijne Janssen, declare that this thesis is my own work. Where I have drawn upon the work of other researchers, this has been fully acknowledged.

Date:

Signed:

Abstract

This thesis uses the published work of professional writers and activists Clementina Black and Margaret Harkness to explore their strategies for the representation of poverty and labour exploitation during the period 1880–1920. Their activism centred on the working poor, and specifically on those workers whose financial necessity forced them into exploitative and underpaid work, causing them to become 'blacklegs' who undercut the wages of other workers. As the generally irregular nature of their employment made these workers' situations difficult to document, Black and Harkness sought alternative ways to portray blackleg work and workers.

The thesis is divided into two parts, each comprising two chapters. Part I examines the two authors' strategies for representing blackleg work to a readership of potential activists across their intersecting literary and activist projects. The first chapter considers Black's approach of engaging her readers as consumers and potential agents for social change. The second chapter addresses Harkness's call for the recognition of blackleg work as an economic phenomenon in which contemporary society was complicit. Part II explores how the implications of the two authors' representative strategies changed in the context of a global economy that produced comparable economic and social problems internationally. The third chapter examines Harkness's work in translation and the difficulties of transferring her representations of blackleg work across borders. The fourth chapter considers how Black engaged consumers with increasingly complex production systems. The thesis concludes with an exploration of how the representative strategies developed by Black and Harkness continued to be used in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries by writers and journalists as well as investigative and regulatory bodies. Although their work is now little read, the enduring use of their methods highlights the relevance of their approach to the representation of social problems that remain difficult to document and scrutinize.

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Abbreviations

CLNY: Consumers' League of New York

CSU: Christian Social Union

NCL: National Consumers' League

NVA: National Vigilance Association

PMG: *Pall Mall Gazette*

RLF: Royal Literary Fund

SDF: Social Democratic Federation

WIC: Women's Industrial Council

WIN: *Women's Industrial News*

WPPL: Women's Protection and Provident League

WTUA: Women's Trade Union Association

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Introduction.

Activist Work in the Literary Market

In a report on speeches given by attendees of the 1892 'Literary Ladies' dinner, an annual social event for professional women writers, the liberal newspaper *Daily News* stated:

> The best speech of the evening was made by Miss Clementina Black, who regretted the way in which women undersell one another and their male competitors, and reminded all that there was such a thing as 'blackleg' work in literature.[1]

Clementina Black had been working as a professional writer since the mid-1870s, and from the 1880s onwards she had also begun to play an active organizing role in the developing women's trade union movement. Her speech invoked her experience as a writer as well as a labour activist. Her assertion that 'there was such a thing as "blackleg" work in literature' indicates that she saw literature as work, and writers as workers selling the products of their labour in a literary market. In her analysis, the pay received by individual workers in this market was determined by an interconnected system of prices and wages in which one writer's decision to undersell their competitors — that is, to accept lower remuneration than other writers — lowered the prices paid for the work of other writers too. Black appealed to women writers not to be 'blacklegs' — workers who undersold and therefore undermined the pay of others — but to insist on a fair price for the products of their labour, not merely for themselves but also for other workers in literature.

Black's speech appears to suggest that women writers were able to exercise a conscious choice to insist on higher pay or not; but there are strong indications in the rest of the article that many women writers undersold their peers out of financial necessity. Awareness of the pressures that irregular work and income placed on

[1] 'Literary Ladies' Dinner', *Daily News*, 3 June 1892, p. 3.

professional writers permeated the proceedings at the 'Literary Ladies' dinner. The *Daily News* reported that 'Mrs. E. R. Pennell gave an amusing account of her search for copy over half Europe […] but she refused to give any hints for the getting rid of copy after it had been obtained'.[2] The expression 'getting rid of copy' points to the rapid buying and selling of products in the literary marketplace. Writers were often obliged to 'get rid' of their work at the price offered, even if this were below the market rate, to meet immediate financial needs. More poignantly, at the close of the dinner the chair noted that the society had found it difficult to keep in contact with attendees, as 'writing women were apt to wander and their addresses hard to discover'.[3] Although this itinerant lifestyle may have been associated with the 'search for copy' or even with the growing freedom and independence available to women writers at the end of the nineteenth century, more often than not frequent house moves were an indicator of financial instability. This context makes clear that Black's call for solidarity had to acknowledge the pecuniary circumstances that caused 'blackleg work in literature'. For isolated workers whose creative work was undervalued as mere copy by themselves as well as by the literary market, united action to insist on a market rate for their writing was difficult. On the other hand, the widespread experience of financial pressures also revealed the necessity for women writers to collaborate for more appropriate remuneration.

The blackleg identity of these women writers, then, was simultaneously a barrier to and a basis for solidarity. Blackleg workers were constrained by financial pressures to accept exploitative working conditions, but this undermined other workers' organization for better conditions, and the failure to secure these improvements in turn forced more workers to accept blackleg terms. The usually irregular and often invisible nature of blackleg work made it difficult to scrutinize and regulate. Black's experience

[2] 'Literary Ladies' Dinner'.
[3] 'Literary Ladies' Dinner'.

as a trade union organizer had familiarized her with the socio-economic conditions that produced blackleg work, and in her 'Literary Ladies' speech she openly and publicly asked her fellow writers to acknowledge the existence of blackleg work and to confront it rather than to allow it to undermine their work insidiously. This thesis explores representations of blackleg work and workers in the writing of Black and her contemporary and fellow author-activist Margaret Harkness, who published under the pseudonym 'John Law'. It asks what strategies these two writers used to visualize the nature and extent of blackleg work for their readers, and what role their portrayals played in the growing international awareness of labour exploitation and the campaigns undertaken to combat the conditions that produced blackleg work in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century.

'Blackleg work in literature'

The phrase 'blackleg work in literature' may be applied in two different ways to the writing of the two key figures in this thesis, Clementina Black (1853–1922) and Margaret Harkness (1854–1923). It reflects their own position in the contemporary literary market, as both depended for their income on the rapid sale of their work in the literary market described in the *Daily News* article; but it may also be taken as a description of the content of their publications. As their writing careers developed, they combined their literary work increasingly with activist projects, publishing fiction with a social message, reports of social investigations, and persuasive campaign texts. The focus of most of their activist writing was on workers whose extreme poverty forced them to accept conditions of overwork and underpayment. The exploitation to which these working poor were subject was commonly referred to as 'sweating' in contemporary discourse. Sweated workers were often confined by the long hours they were required to work to earn a living from the poverty wages they were paid. These

circumstances highlight the powerlessness of sweated workers to resist their working conditions, but also define sweated workers almost automatically as blackleg workers: the wide acceptance of poverty wages made it impossible to ensure the payment of subsistence wages across sweated industries. Both Black and Harkness worked with political and social organizations to resist the conditions that produced this kind of blackleg work, but also developed their own strategies to raise awareness among a broad readership of these conditions and their social and economic impact.

The work of Black and Harkness is rendered distinct by these double implications of their 'blackleg work in literature'. Independently of one another, they appear to have connected their own experience of exploitation in their literary work with their political understanding of blackleg work, and determined to use their publications to highlight the conditions of workers in poverty. This does not mean that their own experience equated to that of the workers they described. While their reliance on selling their writing in the literary market meant that their livelihoods were precarious and they often worked under high pressure, Black and Harkness maintained their middle-class identity and worked in a profession of their choice. Although their income was often low and irregular, it was certainly above starvation level, and both had access to financial support from relatives and friends. Their own experience of blackleg work in the exploitative literary market allowed them to empathize with other exploited workers, but their accounts of working poverty relied on their investigations of deprived neighbourhoods and communication with workers in poverty and precarious employment.

Nor does this thesis suggest that Black and Harkness were unique in their determination to address the extremes of working poverty in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century, or in choosing published writing as their medium. Labour exploitation and the socio-economic problems attendant on chronic poverty were

increasingly recognized as a public concern during this period, and both the growing labour movement and social campaigners responded. Underpaid workers organized in high-profile labour disputes including the Bryant and May Matchwomen's Strike of 1888 and the London Dockworkers' Strike of 1889. The question also received official attention with public inquiries into sweated labour, such as the Lords Select Committee on the Sweating System of 1888–90 and the Select Committee on Homework appointed in 1907.[4] Life in poverty was portrayed in publications ranging from tracts like *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (1883) by Andrew Mearns to slum fiction such as *The Nether World* (1889) by George Gissing and *A Child of the Jago* (1896) by Arthur Morrison. Social investigation as a journalistic genre was popularized by writers practising what Luke Seaber calls 'incognito social investigation', who published 'works detailing their authors' experiences whilst pretending to be poor'.[5] The pioneer of this genre, James Greenwood, styled himself as the 'Amateur Casual' and 'One of the Crowd' in order to give his readers insights into aspects of life in extreme poverty that would otherwise have been largely invisible to them. His regular column in the *Daily Telegraph* and his books, including *Mysteries of Modern London* and *Toilers in London* (both published in 1883), gave accounts of encounters with people in precarious living and working conditions.[6] More formal investigations into poverty conditions were documented in surveys such as *Life and Labour of the People in London* (first, two-volume edition 1889 and 1891) compiled by Charles Booth.

The work of Black and Harkness stands out from this diverse canon of writing on working poverty, however, because of the way they combined different strands of the knowledge, talents, and experience they derived from their literary and activist work

[4] The formation of the committees is described in Sheila Blackburn, *A Fair Day's Wage for a Fair Day's Work? Sweated Labour and the Origins of Minimum Wage Legislation in Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 48–51 and p. 107 resp.
[5] Luke Seaber, *Incognito Social Investigation in British Literature: Certainties in Degradation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 1.
[6] 'One of the Crowd' [James Greenwood], *Mysteries of Modern London* (London: Diprose & Bateman, 1883), and *Toilers in London* (London: Diprose & Bateman, 1883).

in their representation of poverty conditions. As researchers as well as professional writers, they were aware of the difficulties of creating a coherent narrative of precarious work and chronic poverty for a readership personally unfamiliar with these circumstances. Their publications therefore sought compelling literary strategies for representing the knowledge they gained from their social investigation, interaction with low-paid workers, and involvement with other political and labour activists. They portrayed blackleg workers as victims of damaging economic conditions, and called on a broad readership to resist the social and economic status-quo that produced these levels of oppression.

The context of acute financial necessity is crucial to the blackleg work described by Black and Harkness. These economic pressures and their far-reaching impact were summarized by 'General' William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, in *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890). Booth explained that the presence of a 'vast reservoir of unemployed labour is the bane of all efforts to raise the scale of living, to improve the condition of labour'. According to Booth, these unemployed '[m]en hungering to death for lack of opportunity to earn a crust are the materials from which "blacklegs" are made, by whose aid the labourer is constantly defeated in his attempts to improve his condition'.[7] Booth's statements show how extreme poverty damaged organized attempts to raise wages. This was especially evident in cases where blacklegs acted as strike-breakers: accepting work during a strike allowed the employer to continue trading and undermined the cause of the striking workers. In Arthur Morrison's short story 'All that Messuage', published in his collection of short stories about life in poverty *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894), for instance, the protagonist, Old Jack Randall, continues to work during a strike in order to pay the expenses of a property he owns when his tenant refuses to pay rent; as a result, the same tenant

[7] William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London: Salvation Army International Headquarters, 1890), p. 34.

denounces him as a 'bleedin' blackleg'.[8] The availability of strike-breakers was a particular problem in attempts to organize workers in casual employment, such as the unskilled manual labourers who worked at London's docks. The irregular working hours and underpayment current in dock labour had relied on the availability of surplus labour, and when the highly casualized and unskilled dockworkers formed a union and demanded standardized minimum pay and working hours, it seemed likely that the dock owners would find a ready supply of strike-breakers.[9] In order to avert this threat to the strike, over £1000 from the strike fund was used for 'Payments to Blacklegs and Expenses incurred in sending men back to Liverpool, Glasgow and elsewhere'.[10] The fact that these workers accepted payment to leave London suggests that they were not ideologically invested in breaking the strike, but rather were under such strong financial pressures that they were willing to travel across the country to fill the vacancies left by the striking workers in an overcrowded market for unskilled labour. Harkness, however, suggests that for some striking workers who were themselves reduced to near starvation while they had no income, blackleg workers were the target of hostilities. Looking back on the strike in 1890, she wrote about seeing a 'cart laden with bedding […] on its way to the docks. It was rumoured that these things were going to the blacklegs. In a few minutes the cart was wrecked by the strikers. Yet', she added, 'the blacklegs are men and brethren'.[11]

The example of the Dockworkers' Strike indicates that workers could respond to poverty in two different ways: they could either work as blacklegs, accepting low pay and poor conditions rather than no work at all, or they could organize to improve the

[8] Arthur Morrison, 'All that Messuage', in *Tales of Mean Streets* (Chicago: Academic Chicago, 1997 [first published 1894]), pp. 149–65 (p. 165).
[9] For details of the dockworkers' demands, see, for instance, H. Llewellyn Smith and Vaughan Nash, *The Story of the Dockers' Strike, Told by Two East Londoners* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1889), p. 33.
[10] *The Great Dock Labourers' Strike, 1889. Manifesto and Statement of Accounts* (London: Green & M'Allan, 1889), p. 14.
[11] John Law [Margaret Harkness], '"Salvation" v. Socialism: In Praise of General Booth', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 21 October 1890, pp. 1–2 (p. 1).

exploitative conditions of their employment. The side that workers in poverty took in labour disputes was a result of their different responses to acute need; but this created an opposition of interests between workers who unionized and workers who became blacklegs, as blackleg work undermined the efficacy of unions. Workers' decision regarding their own interest thus aligned them with broader political and economic contexts. In 1890, the *Pall Mall Gazette* reported the response of the Conservative press to the 'closing up the ranks' of the trade union of dockworkers established following the Dockworkers' Strike: right-wing newspapers were 'resolute in protesting against the attempt of one man to prevent another "seeking the wages he rejects"'. The article explained that

> [t]he man who seeks the wages which the unionist rejects is of course our old friend the blackleg. It is in his interest — and in that of the capitalists to whom he is so invaluable — that both the *Standard* and *Times* are taking up arms.[12]

This passage argued that blackleg workers' decision to accept wages below those stipulated by the trade union directly benefited employers, and that the representatives of employers' interests therefore promoted blackleg work; this argument aligned blackleg workers with their employers rather than with other workers. Harkness's description of blacklegs as 'men and brethren' ran counter to this opposition between blacklegs and workers as she pointed to the similarities in the conditions of the working poor that caused them to have to make the choice between accepting or resisting exploitative employment.

Comments like those of Booth and Harkness suggest that many workers in poverty were potential blacklegs. This awareness produced some slippage in the terminology around the word 'blackleg' that is echoed in the work of Black and Harkness and also in this thesis. This slippage is particularly relevant to the understanding of the blackleg worker that emerged from Black's speech, viz. one who

[12] 'Mr. Blackleg and his Friends', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 August 1890, p. 1.

undersells other workers. In contemporary discourse, unorganized and exploited workers were variously referred to as 'toilers' and 'sweated' workers as well as 'blacklegs'. These terms signified overwork and underpayment, but were not specific to a particular kind of work or workplace, as exploitation took place in factories, workshops, and in private homes. The place of work could be crucial to workers' ability to organize, however. Strikes of underpaid workers such as the dockworkers, the matchwomen, and sweatshop workers, tended to emerge from more or less centralized workplaces where workers knew their colleagues and could compare their conditions; in contrast, home-based workers who experienced isolation as well as acute financial need were likely to be less able to organize for a fixed rate of pay. Home workers were generally least able to represent themselves, as they were often tied to their home by the nature and demands of their work as well as by family responsibilities and other reasons. The lack of oversight in home industries and the isolation of home workers meant that they were particularly vulnerable to underpayment and exploitation. As such, the identity of the home-based sweated worker was by its nature virtually equivalent to that of the blackleg who accepted wages below the market rate: home industries were described as the 'nursery of strike breakers'.[13] Women were overrepresented in home work, and were structurally underpaid. Michèle A. Pujol notes that in 1917 leading women's rights campaigner Eleanor Rathbone described working women's position as that of '"the eternal blacklegs" who, by undercutting men in industry, threaten the social basis of economic support to the family "which should be most sacred to them"'. As a result, according to Rathbone, '[t]he socioeconomic status quo is maintained only by turning women into "industrial lepers" restricted to the few trades where they won't undercut men'.[14] Rathbone's use of the term 'blacklegs' in her explanation of women's

[13] Judith G. Coffin, *The Politics of Women's Work: The Paris Garment Trades 1750–1915* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 175–76.
[14] Michèle A. Pujol, *Feminism and Anti-Feminism in Early Economic Thought* (Aldershot: Elgar, 1992), p. 79.

status in the labour market makes clear that the blackleg identity was often an involuntary one that workers found it impossible to break out of.

In this thesis the term ‘blackleg worker’ refers to workers engaged in underpaid work in exploitative conditions, because workers whose wages were below the market rate almost universally undersold other workers, and because many underpaid workers were under a level of economic pressure that significantly inhibited their ability to resist the exploitation to which they were subject. The thesis uses the term ‘blackleg work’ to refer to work carried out under an economic strain that caused workers to prioritize the immediate possibility of earning an income over considerations of how their decision to accept exploitative working conditions would affect other workers’ ability to resist these conditions. This term can therefore refer to workers belonging to different social classes, from workers in sweated home-based employment such as matchbox making to professional writers like Black and Harkness.

The fact that workers who accepted underpayment undermined labour organization meant that their cause could not be readily incorporated into the aims of the developing labour movement. On the other hand, philanthropic campaigns aimed at the amelioration of their immediate conditions did not provide long-term solutions to the structural problems of chronic poverty, overwork, and underpayment. Combining their political and social understanding of the question, Black and Harkness tried to reconcile these conflicts and took stances that brought political discourse into social campaigns and social context to political theory. As a result, generations of critics have experienced difficulties in categorizing the political and social affiliations of both author-activists over their long careers. Emma Francis states of Black that she ‘was a pragmatist rather than an ideologue, a utopian rather than a scientific socialist; the

precise complexion of her politics is difficult to pin down'.[15] Liselotte Glage goes further, stating that, for Black, 'the path to pursue lay along the lines of gradual change, and her Socialist friends possibly thought of her as a revisionist and a meliorist. A definite labelling of her position is not possible.'[16] Similarly, John Goode comments that Harkness's 'involvement with socialism may have been emotive rather than thought out, and with the usual corollary that sentimental commitment tends towards opportunistic alliance'.[17] Ian Birchall's more blunt assessment is that 'Harkness's commitment to socialism was short-lived and seems to have been fairly untheoretical'.[18] These readings of Black's and Harkness's activism as ideologically inconsistent at best and flawed at worst suggest a third implication to their blackleg work. If a blackleg was a worker who undermined the campaigns and organization of other workers, activists who engaged in 'opportunistic alliances' may appear to be blacklegs to the specific causes of the different social and political organizations with which they worked. Harkness's description of blackleg workers as 'men and brethren', for instance, was not in keeping with the aims of the Dockworkers' Strike, which she had publicly supported, and could be seen as undermining the organization of the dockworkers that had been the strike's core aim.[19]

I suggest, however, that Black and Harkness were motivated to enter into various alliances over the course of their careers as author-activists precisely because of

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[15] Emma Francis, 'Why Wasn't Amy Levy More of a Socialist? Levy, Clementina Black and Liza of Lambeth', in *Amy Levy: Critical Essays*, ed. by Naomi Hetherington and Nadia Valman (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), pp. 47–69 (p. 53).

[16] Liselotte Glage, *Clementina Black: A Study in Social History and Literature* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1981), p. 186.

[17] John Goode, 'Margaret Harkness and the Socialist Novel', in *The Socialist Novel in Britain: Towards the Recovery of a Tradition*, ed. by H. Gustav Klaus (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), pp. 45–66 (p. 51).

[18] Ian Birchall, 'Another Vizetelly Connection: Engels, Harkness and Zola', *Bulletin of the Emile Zola Society*, 6 (1993), 3–11 (p. 4).

[19] Harkness's support for the Dockworkers' Strike included a series of positive reports in the press. See, for instance, John Law, 'The Dockers' "Tanner"', *British Weekly*, 6 September 1889, p. 309, and 'To the Editor of the *Daily News*', *Daily News*, 23 August 1889, p. 6. I explore Harkness's representation of the strike in more detail in my article '"What you write down is going to the press": Margaret Harkness's Accounts of the 1889 London Dockworkers' Strike', *Victorians: A Journal of Culture and Literature*, 132 (2017), 162–74.

their investment in the blackleg workers who were underrepresented by different organizations. Their campaigns pursued the double aims of practically ameliorating the poverty conditions that produced blackleg labour and resisting exploitation in a wider socio-economic context, and they put their aims to a variety of readerships in the pursuit of immediate support. Black's career in particular reflects a pragmatic investment of her time and energies into campaigns she believed to be viable at different stages in her career, as she transferred the focus of her activism from trade unionism in the 1890s to investigative work for the Women's Industrial Council and to the campaign for a minimum wage, framed within the context of early twentieth-century awareness-raising of sweated labour. Harkness's continuous appreciation of the work of the Salvation Army to ameliorate the material conditions of the working poor, and her disillusionment with the practice of socialist politics, may be viewed in the same light. Their representations of blackleg work reflected their own understandings of contemporary socio-economic conditions and, although influenced by the different activist discourses in which they participated, were rooted in their own investigations into blackleg work and interaction with blackleg workers.

By exploring their position as caught between different models of activism, different social, economic, political, and gender identities, and the pull between writing for money and writing with activist aims, this thesis defines the work of Harkness and Black as articulating an alternative canon of writing about an underrepresented socio-economic group. Their work looked for ways of representing underpaid and undervalued workers in order to help readers understand their economic conditions. Their narrative strategies often resist categorization on the basis of politics, class, or genre; and perhaps because of this their work had a wide reach and proved internationally influential. In response to the lack of consistent figures on poverty wages and working hours, their representative strategies combined individualized cases and

generalized examples to show the common nature of the insecurity and stress associated with the poverty that produced blackleg work.

Black and Harkness themselves occupied different kinds of blackleg positions in their representative projects. Relying on the income from their publications, they were obliged to sell their portrayals of blackleg work in an insecure literary market. At different stages in their careers, both sold their writing for less than it was worth, making them blackleg workers; certainly they were obliged to tailor their work to the demands of readerships and publishers, making them blacklegs to some of the political causes with which they were affiliated as their commitment to these was compromised by their own need to work for their living. On the other hand, they often used the opportunities created by their experience as blackleg writers to push the boundaries of the ideological frameworks underpinning popular genres. Blacklegs, then, were the authors, as well as the subjects, of their counter-canon.

Finding value: methodology

The representation of workers has been a focus of much of the small body of critical work on Black and Harkness, but many critics have tended to see their work as representing a working class defined against a middle class, often without acknowledging class distinctions between workers based on economic and social status. In exploring the representation of blackleg work in particular, this thesis identifies a connection between Black and Harkness as workers in literature and the workers whose conditions they described, but also recognizes the divisions between workers that blackleg work produced.

The recognition of the pervasive nature of blackleg conditions underpins the thesis's integrated approach to the overall oeuvres of Black and Harkness. To date, much of the secondary literature discussing these two author-activists has concentrated

on either their literary or their campaign writing. Analyses of Black's literary work, such as Liselotte Glage's biography *Clementina Black: A Study in Social History and Literature* (1981) and Lynne Hapgood's 1996 article 'The Novel and Political Agency', read her novels in the context of her socio-political philosophy, but critical interest has generally focused more on her writing on women's work. Her representation of working women is central to Ellen F. Mappen's history of the Women's Industrial Council, *Helping Women at Work* (1985), and to Emma Francis's chapter 'Why Wasn't Amy Levy More of a Socialist?' in *Amy Levy: Critical Essays* (2010). Black's campaign writing on sweated labour is regularly cited as historical evidence on sweating conditions in studies such as *Difficult Subjects* (2002) by Kristina Huneault and *A Fair Day's Wage for a Fair Day's Work?* (2007) by Sheila Blackburn.[20] Critical work on Harkness usually centres on the social novels she published in the period 1887–1890. Chapters on Harkness by John Goode and Ingrid von Rosenberg in compendia on socialist fiction (1982 and 1987, respectively) read her novels as reflections of her political beliefs.[21] Studies such as *Rebellious Structures* (1987) by Gerd Bjørhovde and *Wisps of Violence* (1993) by Eileen Sypher use Harkness's novels to draw conclusions about her readership and aims. More recently, both literary scholars and historians have made reference to Black and Harkness in broader scholarship on subjects like London's East End and women's artistic and socio-political networks, in studies including *Walking the Victorian Streets* (1995) by Deborah Epstein Nord, *Slumming* (2004) by Seth Koven, *Women Poets and Urban Aestheticism* by Ana Parejo Vadillo (2005), *Socialism, Sex, and the Culture of Aestheticism in Britain* (2007) by Ruth Livesey, and *Roomscape* (2013) by Susan David Bernstein. These works draw on a combination of sources including both the authors' published work and more personal evidence of their

[20] See, for instance, Kristina Huneault, *Difficult Subjects: Working Women and Visual Culture, Britain 1880–1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 130, and Blackburn, *A Fair Day's Wage*, pp. 4, 65.
[21] Goode, pp. 45–66, and Ingrid von Rosenberg, 'French Naturalism and the English Socialist Novel: Margaret Harkness and William Edwards Tirebuck', in *The Rise of Socialist Fiction 1880–1914*, ed. by H. Gustav Klaus (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1987), pp. 151–71.

social and political projects, such as correspondence with other key figures in these networks. New scholarly editions of Harkness's first novel, *A City Girl* (1887), edited by Deborah Mutch (2015) and Tabitha Sparks (2017) have included examples of Harkness's non-fiction social writing to contextualize her social novel.[22] Works like these offer a broader perspective on the extent of Black's and Harkness's careers as author-activists, and this thesis builds on this scholarship to show that their careers brought together their literary and campaign work as two strands of the same writing project.

Tracing their representations of blackleg work and workers across these two strands of their oeuvre, this thesis reads the work of Black and Harkness as strategies to represent and narrate labour exploitation and the problems it produced, and considers how their representations shaped subsequent campaigns. It considers their work in the light of international activist discourses and strategies for representing poverty. In doing so it builds on earlier studies that have contextualized Harkness in particular as a participant in the development of international literary strategies for the representation of social problems, such as *Der spätviktorianische Sozialroman von 1880 bis 1890* [The late-Victorian social novel from 1880 to 1890] (1977) by Werner G. Urlaub and *Der englische und französische Sozialroman des 19. Jahrhunderts und seine Rezeption in Deutschland* [The nineteenth-century English and French social novel and its reception in Germany] (1993) by Norbert Bachleitner. In 1984 Beate Kaspar considered Harkness's engagement with naturalism as a means of representing working-class characters and their conditions in *Margaret Harkness,* A City Girl*: Eine literaturwissenschaftliche Untersuchung zum naturalistichen Roman des Spätviktorianismus* [A literary examination of the naturalist novel of the late Victorian period]. The thesis also draws on contemporary sources that reveal the roles Black and

[22] John Law, *A City Girl*, ed. by Deborah Mutch (Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2015), and Margaret Harkness, *A City Girl*, ed. by Tabitha Sparks (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2017).

Harkness played in the development of internationally shared activist rhetoric and campaign strategies.

The time span of this thesis, *c*. 1880–1920, reflects the period of Black's and Harkness's active careers. The thesis itself is divided into two parts, each comprising two chapters. Part I has a literary focus based on close reading of a selection of Black's and Harkness's publications, contextualized with archival and critical material, in order to interrogate the representative strategies they used in their work and the reasons for their choices. Part II draws on a wider selection of published, archival, and historical sources with an international focus to explore how the literary work of Harkness and Black was transformed into other discursive, representative, and activist agendas. The structure of the individual chapters is broadly chronological, following the two authors' political and social ideas from their roots in the late nineteenth century to their afterlives in the early twentieth.

Part I, 'The Blackleg Writer', explores the published work of Black and Harkness to trace the development of their ideas over the course of their careers, beginning around 1880 and ending with their final publications. It considers how their own activist priorities were reflected in the representative strategies they used to convey them to their readerships. Chapter 1, 'Women's Work in Literature', is devoted to Black and divided into close readings of her fiction and her campaign writing. My analysis of Black's writing career and its interconnectedness with her activism illuminates the relationship of the professional writer to her readers as consumers. I consider how Black used the opportunities this offered to inform readers about labour exploitation and engage them as potential activists for social change. Chapter 2, 'Writing about the Poor', is concerned with Harkness, examining in turn her social investigation writing and her fiction, with a particular focus on the four novels she published between 1887 and 1890. The chapter argues that Harkness's novels functioned as extensions of the

examples she gave in her social investigation to balance the unavailability of reliable numerical representations of poverty conditions. The novels allowed her to fictionalize a generalized version of the cases she encountered in her social investigation. Both authors' published writings were thus rooted in social observation and concern and were intended to produce social change.

Part II, 'The Global Blackleg', considers the social consequences of the two authors' literary work through examples of international activist projects linked to their publications. These chapters place Black's and Harkness's representations of poverty conditions in a global economy as activists adopted successful strategies for raising awareness of shared social problems in their own countries. Looking forward to the twentieth century reflects the development of activist ideas and discourse, and the two chapters therefore follow a chronological order. Chapter 3, 'Blackleg Work across Borders', considers the importance of translations in the development of a shared international discourse around poverty and labour exploitation. Through a case study of contemporary translations of Harkness's novel *A Manchester Shirtmaker* (1890) the chapter builds on the idea that fiction offered an insight into poverty conditions that could not be reliably represented through numerical data. It also considers how, in the absence of objective data and context, the message of a text could be distorted by geographical distance, even though the social problems addressed were common to different countries. Chapter 4, 'Blackleg Workers on Display', examines the changes in Black's representative strategy as she developed her proposals for consumer activism in relation to her growing awareness of the complexities of an international market. It suggests that her participation in the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' of 1906, an initiative of the Women's Industrial Council based on a German example, reflected an attempt to visualize, rather than narrativize, sweating conditions in order to enlighten consumers about the systems that produced these levels of exploitation. In these last two

chapters the idea of the blackleg as an international phenomenon — with cheaper goods imported from abroad undercutting the wages of domestic workers — is adapted to reflect the idea of blackleg work in a social cause, as the products of activist labour were taken out of context and reinterpreted for causes that had strayed some way from their original purpose.

The conclusion, 'The Blackleg Writer: Afterlives and Futures', explores how the investigation and awareness-raising strategies pioneered by author-activists such as Black and Harkness have been used, developed, and adapted by investigators and activists in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This conclusion highlights the influence and relevance of these blackleg writers in spite of their absence from a literary canon.

The work of these two understudied author-activists has significant cultural and historical value because it sought for ways of portraying the consequences of labour exploitation that resisted imposed boundaries of class allegiance, political identity, and assumptions of gender. Their work was internationally influential and helped to shape later strategies for investigating and representing social problems that remain difficult to clarify by the sole means of numerical or statistical evidence. Black and Harkness produced a counter-canon of the blackleg that must be accommodated in the wider critical knowledge of women's writing about world problems and the working poor around the turn of the twentieth century.

Part I.

The Blackleg Writer:

Clementina Black, Margaret Harkness, and Representative Strategy

Chapter 1.

Women's Work in Literature:

Clementina Black and the Reader as Agent of Social Change

Across Clementina Black's long and prolific publishing career as an author and activist there is a strong preoccupation with the social and economic undervaluing of women's abilities and above all women's work. Her speech at the 'Literary Ladies' dinner indicated that she was aware that women's work often constituted blackleg work in some form, generally because women were paid lower wages as a matter of course, causing them to undersell other — male and female — workers. Her speech also reflected her belief that women's individual rejection of their blackleg status by claiming fair wages for themselves could have far-reaching effects and help to raise wages for women workers more generally.

This idea that individual women could act as agents of wider social change is central to Black's work. She applied this conviction to women across social classes, arguing that women's talents should be recognized to allow them to engage in fulfilling and fairly remunerated work. Her fiction and campaign writing portrayed capable and proactive women who resisted the undervaluing of their work and abilities, rejecting their blackleg identity in pursuit of better conditions for themselves. These included middle-class women who sought social influence and working-class women who engaged in trade union organization or pursued well-remunerated work to improve the opportunities available to themselves and their families. Black encouraged her readers to emulate these women's resistance to the status-quo. The representation of social and economic problems was crucial to this. Both her fiction and her campaign writing were designed to help readers understand the social and economic oppressions she was addressing. Her campaign writing further sought to empower her predominantly female

middle-class readers to take action against social problems by proposing strategies for activism that readers could engage with.

Black's representation of women and work developed as she explored different possibilities in her fiction and her campaign writing over the four decades of her working life. In her novels and stories she experimented with realism, fantasy, and historical fiction. She also allied her activist projects with a variety of organizations. In the 1880s and 90s, she worked with the Women's Protection and Provident League (WPPL) and its successor the Women's Trade Union Association (WTUA) to support the developing women's trade union movement. In the early twentieth century she re-contextualized her social investigations, working with the Women's Industrial Council (WIC) to bring the exploitative conditions of many women's work to public notice. Her identity as a blackleg writer was important to both strands of her career: her experience of publishing widely in order to earn a living familiarized her with popular genres and publishing platforms, and this gave her the means to reach and the skills to appeal to a wide readership. As a worker in a precarious literary market, where writers working in isolation and under pressure were often paid less than their work was worth, furthermore, she was able to empathize with the experience of women workers whose gender made them blacklegs almost as a matter of course.

Black's contemporary reputation rested on her identity as an author-activist; yet it is important to emphasize that, although her activist work had a high profile, she continued to be identified with her work as a blackleg writer throughout her life. This chapter therefore takes a comprehensive approach to Black's career, including both its literary and activist strands, to explore how she developed her strategies for representing women, their social position, and their work. Some sense of the importance of her identity as a writer is conveyed by an application submitted to the Royal Literary Fund (RLF) on Black's behalf in 1921, the year before her death. The application asked for

financial support to supplement the Civil List pension Black had held since 1913 for her work on 'industrial subjects'.[1] While the application was made by members of activist groups that Black had worked with, the decision to apply to the RLF suggests that the applicants felt that Black, at the end of her working life, deserved recognition for her literary work as well as her activism. There is something of a paradox, however, in the application's representation of Black's fiction as blackleg work in literature. Although it was her long career as a writer that made her eligible for relief from the RLF, the application deliberately played up her social engagement as opposed to her literary success: her dedication to working for others was cited as the reason for her failure to provide for her own future. Barbara Leigh Hutchins, a member of the Fabian Women's Group who had worked with Black on the WIC's Investigation Committee, wrote:

> I think there is little doubt that if Miss Black had kept strictly to writing the books that paid her best she might have secured more comforts for her own old age, but as you know she has always been a most public spirited [*sic*] and unselfish woman and constantly gave time to working for *good*/ causes, that might have been more lucratively employed.[2]

Similarly, Millicent Garrett Fawcett stated that Black 'has helped the sweated woman worker more than she has helped to provide for herself'.[3] These comments give the impression that Black's popular fiction could have earned her a better livelihood if she had produced more of it, but that she made a selfless decision to dedicate her energies to activism instead, valuing the ethical aspects of her writing over its economic potential. Although the application implied that her novels sold well, it also appears that they were little read by 1921. Hutchins admitted she was only familiar with Black's final novel, *Caroline*, published in 1908; and, in a supporting letter to the application, journalist and

[1] London, London Library of Political and Economic Science (LSE), William Henry Beveridge correspondence *c*. 1912–13, BEVERIDGE/2B/12/2, F. W. Leith-Ross to William Henry Beveridge, 10 January 1913. See also London, British Library (BL), Royal Literary Fund archive, Loan 96 RLF 1/3136/1, 'Application Form, Clementina Black', 28 November 1921.

[2] BL Loan 96 RLF 1/3136/3, B. L. Hutchins to G. P. Gooch, 16 November 1921. The letter is typewritten; the italics indicate a handwritten insertion. Hutchins's role in the WIC is noted in Ellen F. Mappen, 'Introduction', in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Clementina Black (London: Virago, 1983), pp. i–xv (p. v).

[3] BL Loan 96 RLF 1/3136/4, Millicent Garrett Fawcett to the Royal Literary Fund, 16 November 1921.

Liberal politician George Peabody Gooch indicated that 'her novels, I imagine, are nearly forgotten'.[4] While the application did seek, to a degree, to integrate the two strands of Black's career, it rested on the assumption that, in contrast to her ephemeral popular fiction, the benefits of Black's social work were lasting. This chapter argues that Black's identity as a blackleg writer played a much more significant role in her parallel careers than the application suggests, as the literary market in fact informed and supported her activist practices. Writing for the market provided a necessary income, but perhaps more importantly, it taught her how to represent social problems in ways that were both comprehensible and engaging for her readership.

Black's reader-centred writing sought not only to inform her readers about the exploitation of other women, but also to empower them to see themselves as agents of social change, both for themselves and for working women. The first section of this chapter, 'Reaching readers', shows how Black's experience of professional writing allowed her to identify her readership and develop a style of writing aimed at communicating with these readers. It considers how Black used her understanding of her readers as consumers to encourage their intellectual engagement with the products they consumed by addressing social questions in ways that appealed to their imagination. The next two sections examine how she used these strategies in her fiction and her campaign writing. 'Empowering readers' explores how Black's fiction pushed the boundaries of genre in order to present her middle-class female readers with alternative understandings of the social status-quo and encourage them to work towards social change themselves. It includes case studies of two of Black's novels from the 1890s, both of which use political themes within a romanticized plot, to examine how these stories allowed Black and her readers to imagine possibilities for women's participation in political and social progress. The final section, 'Writing working

[4] BL Loan 96 RLF 1/3136/5, G. P. Gooch to the Royal Literary Fund, December 1921.

women', considers Black's efforts to empower women as agents of social change in the practical context of her campaign writing. Through case studies of two social investigation texts from the early twentieth century, it examines how Black brought together her social investigation and her literary skill in her representation of women's experience of poverty and exploitative work in order to inspire sympathy in her readers. While Black altered and adapted the details of her political views and social plans over the course of her activist career, she adhered to her own social priorities. Reading Black's literary and campaign writings as two related parts of a single oeuvre gives an insight into her developing strategies for motivating her readers to pursue social change.

Reaching readers

What Linda Hughes calls Black's 'candid glance at the literary marketplace' in her 'Literary Ladies' speech highlights the link between her literary and activist professions: Black saw writers as workers who were required not only to show literary skill, but also to navigate the literary market.[5] This section considers the meaning of the term 'blackleg writer' in relation to Black, and how she used her status and experience in the literary market as a basis for solidarity and social activism. Blackleg writers who sold the products of their labour to a variety of publishers relied on a solid understanding of the demands of the different readerships that constituted the market for their output, and Black was strongly aware of her dependence on her readers as consumers of her work. Before addressing her publications in detail, therefore, it is important to examine Black's approach to her readership. The prolific and diverse body of publications she produced between 1876 and 1919 is indicative of a high economic pressure to produce; but she also saw possibilities for adding value to this blackleg work

[5] Linda Hughes, 'A Club of their Own: The "Literary Ladies", New Woman Writing, and "Fin-de-Siècle" Authorship', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 35.1 (2007), 233–60 (p. 251) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40347133> [accessed 7 June 2015].

in literature. While Black's literary and campaign work dealt with widely divergent subjects, they shared a similar readership. With the exception of *The Truck Acts: What They Do and What They Ought to Do* (1894), the pamphlet she co-authored with Stephen N. Fox, one of Charles Booth's investigators, and her *Rhyme of the Factory Acts* (1900), both of which presented explanations of labour law of equal use to interested middle-class readers and to workers seeking a better understanding of their own position, the different strands of Black's writing were directed predominantly at middle-class women. Throughout her career, she used the wide reach of her popular publications to offer these readers new information and alternative ideas. While she was conscious of the fact that she was producing literary work for immediate consumption by her readers, she aimed for this literary consumption to engender further thought and, wherever possible, action.

The notion of the writer's creative input lending additional value to literary work is evident in Black's article 'Type-Writing and Journalism for Women', published in an 1892 compilation entitled *Our Boys and Girls and What to Do with Them*. The volume's aim was to suggest new career options for young women and men to reduce pressure on more established professions in a crowded labour market. In the article, Black treated typewriting and journalism as two aspects of the writing profession, advising young women on the skills required to obtain good positions and fair pay in them. She cast this advice for personal advancement in a broader socio-economic context, arguing that

> [e]very woman who […] enlarges the borders of work, not only has a better chance of doing well for herself, but also helps to improve the condition of all women, because every new channel opened relieves the pressure of competition which is causing the under payment [*sic*] of women in so many callings.[6]

[6] Clementina Black, 'Type-Writing and Journalism for Women', in *Our Boys and Girls and What to Do with Them*, ed. by John Watson (London: Ward, Lock, Bowden, 1892), pp. 35–45 (p. 44).

She combined this promise of personal reward with evocations of self-sacrifice and a duty to other workers in the struggle for better wages, stating: 'The battle [for fair pay] is not her own; it is that of all women-workers — ay, and in the long run of all men-workers too.'[7] Her argument here, that individual women's fight for fair pay benefited all female workers, was precisely the same as in the 'Literary Ladies' speech she gave in the same year, suggesting that women's initiatives to improve their own position could help women workers more widely. The notion that levels of training and skill should determine the fair rate of wages produced its own divisions within literary work, however. For Black, the distinction was determined by the literary worker's creative input: that is, whether they wrote the material themselves or merely typed the work of other writers. Her pointed reference to the need in female journalists for 'good breeding' introduced a class dimension; but she recommended journalism as 'one of the very few callings in which a woman may, if she is fortunate, arrive at an income calculated rather on a man's scale than a woman's'.[8] This suggests that she considered the market value of the work of good female journalists to derive from their ability to convey information to readers in a way that reflected both their intelligence and good taste. This combination of pleasing and stimulating a particular readership is evident throughout Black's own work; and her article indicates that she felt these skills deserved recognition as a key component of valuable literary work.

Black herself had cultivated this knowledge of literary work and the necessary skills of engaging with a variety of readerships over sixteen years of regular participation in the literary market. That her choice of literature as an available career option was a deliberate one is evident from her first publishing ventures. As the daughter of a solicitor, she had a middle-class upbringing, but her large family's relatively straitened circumstances required her and her sisters to educate themselves to

[7] Black, 'Type-Writing and Journalism', p. 45.
[8] Black, 'Type-Writing and Journalism', pp. 40, 38.

earn a livelihood. In her unpublished reflections on her own education, 'The Mind of One Child', Black described the fact that she had learnt to read at an early age as 'one of the most fortunate facts of my life' as it was the source of many talents that helped her to develop her literary career. Reading, she wrote, 'gave me, while still a child, a wide vocabulary, a considerable acquaintance with English classics and the quite invaluable power of reading very rapidly. To books I owe nearly all the useful knowledge I have ever collected'.[9] She further indicated that creative expression was encouraged in her family, stating: 'In our house no child was ever short of paper for writing or drawing.'[10] Black began writing professionally while still living with her family in Brighton; her short stories appeared in periodicals from 1876, and her first novel, *A Sussex Idyl* [*sic*], was published in 1877. She also attempted to turn other skills into remunerative labour. In 'The Mind of One Child', she described learning French and German at an early age, and this formed a solid basis for the ability to translate and review foreign-language texts.[11] In 1880 she wrote to George Bell and Sons to propose a translation of a French-language educational text.[12] Although I have not been able to trace this translation and she may not have undertaken it at all, the letter gives an indication of her proactive attitude to creating opportunities for paid work by identifying potential areas of interest for both publishers and readers.

Black not only applied this understanding of the literary market to her own work, but also used it in practical solidarity with other literary workers. In an 1883 letter to her friend Eleanor Marx, Black expressed sympathy with 'trouble' Marx was experiencing — possibly a reference to the death of Marx's sister Jenny Marx Longuet a

[9] Evanston, Northwestern University Library (NUL), Garnett Papers, MS164, fol. 13, Clementina Black, 'The Mind of One Child', unpublished manuscript, p. 6. The manuscript is undated, but on the final page Black gives her address as 22 Westmoreland Road, Barnes, S. W. 13, where she lived at the end of her life with her niece and nephew-in-law (p. 17). Her note of acknowledgment of her RLF grant was sent from this address. See BL Loan 96 RLF 1/3136/10, Clementina Black to H. J. C. Marshall, 16 December 1921.
[10] NUL MS164 fol. 13, p. 10.
[11] NUL MS164 fol. 13, pp. 10–11.
[12] Reading, University of Reading Special Collections (UoR), Archive of George Bell & Sons, 228/5, Clementina Black to G. Bell & Sons, 31 January 1880.

couple of months before — and asked: 'Have you any work or lessons that must be done? If so do let me do it. It would be the most real pleasure to me to think that I c[oul]d be of some little help.'[13] Black's letter suggests that, although Marx might not be able to attend to work duties due to her personal circumstances, her work 'must be done' to provide an income. As a fellow blackleg worker in literature who was, like Marx, proficient in German and French, Black was able to take on some of Marx's work. In a similar example of the sharing of professional knowledge, Black helped her friend Amy Levy to publish her first volume of poetry, *Xantippe* (1881), and Levy responded by leaving the management of her literary estate to Black. In her will, dated 4 December 1887, Levy bequeathed 'all books papers letters documents of every kind and copy rights [*sic*] if any' to Black.[14] In this role of literary executrix, Black proposed a volume edition of Levy's short stories to Macmillan in 1890, the year after Levy's suicide.[15] Glage notes, however, that most of Levy's 'books, papers, and manuscripts were left in possession of her family who destroyed some of them', meaning that Black is unlikely to have accrued much profit from Levy's bequest.[16] Her efforts to get Levy's work published therefore constituted an act of solidarity without an eye to personal gain. Black's publishing experience was also applicable in her social work: in 1914, she undertook negotiations with George Bell and Sons on behalf of the WIC to publish the collection *Married Women's Work* (1915); she edited the volume and also liaised with the publisher about the details of its typesetting and formatting.[17] In each of these cases, Black shared the knowledge and experience she had gained as a blackleg writer with

[13] Amsterdam, International Institute of Social History, Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels Papers, G98, Clementina Black to Eleanor Marx, 15 March 1883, emphasis in original.
[14] Quoted in Liselotte Glage, *Clementina Black: A Study in Social History and Literature* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1981), p. 22.
[15] UoR, Records of Macmillan and Co. Ltd., MAC BLA 4/115, Clementina Black to Macmillan & Co., 20 May 1890.
[16] Glage, p. 22.
[17] UoR, Archive of George Bell & Sons, 352/15–17, Correspondence between Clementina Black and Ernest Bell, 8 April 1914–22 May 1914.

others in order to adapt their work to the requirements of its consumers, thus ensuring it was viable and profitable in the relevant market.

Her own work continued throughout her life to be based on the blackleg writer's anticipation of and response to the literary market. Her publications reflect the broad range of her own interests, but also include subjects that she appears to have mastered purely for commissions.[18] Much of the translation work to which she turned her hand in the early years of the twentieth century falls into the latter category: she published translations of a number of French-language works of art history, as well as the monumental 1904 study *Mitteleuropa* [English-language edition *Central Europe* (1903)] by German geography professor Joseph Partsch, without much prior study of either art history or geography. She recorded that, when invited to translate *Mitteleuropa*, she 'suggested to the publisher that my knowing no geography might be a disqualification. He, however, seemed to think that, as long as I knew German and English, geography was immaterial'.[19] Black revealed her blackleg writer's willingness to adapt and learn new skills in order to be able to take on a job as she went on to note: 'I undertook the task, saying to myself that, at least, when it was finished, I <u>should</u> know some geography.'[20] Wherever possible, however, Black appears to have sought to imbue her work as a blackleg writer with social meaning. The literary reviews she routinely produced throughout the 1890s, for instance, always considered both the literary merit and social impact of the text. From 1887 onwards, Black began to publish campaign writing on women's economic and social position alongside her literary corpus. In over fifty articles she addressed a wide variety of related subjects from

[18] The most comprehensive available bibliography of Black's publications is given in Glage, pp. 189–92. As new research has discovered more of Black's work, Glage's substantial list is now indicative rather than exhaustive. For instance, some key campaign texts are missing, including Black's article 'Match-Box Making at Home', published in the *English Illustrated Magazine* in May 1892. Nor does Glage tend to give details of the periodical publications of those of Black's short stories that were later collected in book form. As a result, the extent of the blackleg nature of Black's publishing career is not always fully reflected.

[19] NUL MS164 fol. 13, p. 14.

[20] NUL MS164 fol. 13, pp. 14–15, emphasis in original.

women's trade unionism to the burden of domestic work on women. As part of her work with the Women's Industrial Council, she also wrote or contributed to at least three volumes of social investigation into women's work between 1907 and 1915. Her contributions present information ranging from numerical data and economic analysis to descriptions of working women's experience, generally collected and arranged by Black herself.

The two strands of her publishing career converged explicitly in the 1890s. During the 1880s, her literary output had diminished as she devoted the greater part of her time to trade union work, but financial necessity prompted her to return to the regular publication of fiction to allow her to support 'herself and her unpaid activist work through her publications'.[21] Glage's descriptions of Black's income reveal a precarious financial situation: she indicates that, while Black's social and political work was 'honorary', her 'books brought her next to nothing'.[22] In 1891, Black voiced concern regarding her financial situation to fellow labour activist John Burns, writing:

> It begins to look possible that I may have to give up my work in London simply because for a good many months now I haven't made enough to live on; and I can't go on getting help from my people. I hope it may not come to that, for it w[ould] be a bitter grief to me.[23]

This letter was written eleven years after the appearance of Black's last book-length work of fiction, the short story collection *Mericas, and Other Stories* (1880). She resumed her blackleg fiction writing in 1892 with the publication of *Miss Falkland, and Other Stories*, a collection that included several short stories that had been published in periodicals, such as 'Captain Lackland', 'Miss Falkland', and 'The Professor's Piano', all originally published in the *English Illustrated Magazine*, in December 1885, June 1887, and February 1890 respectively. The new work she went on to publish during the

[21] Susan David Bernstein, *Roomscape: Women Writers in the British Museum from George Eliot to Virginia Woolf* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 52.
[22] Glage, p. 48.
[23] BL, Correspondence, speeches, etc., of J. Burns, M.P., Add MS 46289, Clementina Black to John Burns, 11 March 1891, emphasis in original.

1890s suggests a search for ways of bringing together her fiction and campaign aims by imbuing the content of her stories with political meaning.

Black's first full-length novel since *Orlando* (1880), *An Agitator* (1894), was written at a time when she prioritized her activism over her literary production, and was her only work of fiction to take the labour movement for its subject. *The Princess Désirée* (1896) and *The Pursuit of Camilla* (1899) also addressed political themes, but in the format of adventure stories. Critics have understood the contrast of these novels with the detailed realism of her campaign writing to be deliberate. Glage speculates that Black's 'taste for the improbable, the fantastic' in her fiction may have derived from 'the simple need for escape, for an outlet after the daily strain'; in other words, it offered emotional and creative relief from the realities she encountered in her activist work.[24] Ruth Livesey suggests a more thought-out function for the fiction as providing 'a crucial aesthetic supplement to her practical work in the labour movement': it allowed Black to experiment with 'sites of political resolution' that went beyond the shorter term of her campaign objectives.[25] In my view, her fiction served a distinct purpose beyond that of an artistic, emotional, or financial supplement to her activist work: it set out to design its own utopian social ideal. Where her campaign writing pursued clearly stated and specified changes to existing social, economic, and political practice, Black's fiction presented alternative realities based on fundamental rethinking of social structures and hierarchies and conceptions of gender and class. By advancing this ideal in the form of popular fiction, Black made it available to her readers as well as to herself.

In developing this form of utopian imagination, Black progressed from the blackleg writer's dependence on her readers as consumers of her work to discover ways

[24] Glage, p. 47.
[25] Ruth Livesey, *Socialism, Sex, and the Culture of Aestheticism in Britain, 1880–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 68.

of pushing the boundaries of expectations and conventions of genre in order to encourage intellectual engagement in the consumption of literary work. Her perception of these possibilities for communicating with the consumers of literature is reflected in her 1892 review of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Thomas Hardy's novel had first appeared as a serial in the *Graphic* in 1891 and was published in book form in 1892. Black's urgent response to the narrative gives an insight into her views on the conflict between the social potential of literature and the demands of the contemporary literary market. She praised the 'profound moral earnestness' of Hardy's novel, but went on to predict that 'this very earnestness, by leading him to deal with serious moral problems, will assuredly cause this book to be reprobated by numbers of well-intentioned people who have read his previous novels with complacency'. This praise of Hardy's novel then broadened into an indictment of the consumers of literature, specifically a figure she dubbed 'the conventional reader'. Representative of the socially conservative trend of popular and marketable fiction, this stock figure, according to Black,

> wishes to be excited, but not to be disturbed; he likes to have new pictures presented to his imagination, but not to have new ideas presented to his mind. He detests unhappy endings, mainly because an unhappy ending nearly always involves an indirect appeal to the conscience; and the conscience, when aroused, is always demanding a reorganisation of that traditional pattern of right and wrong which it is the essence of conventionality to regard as immutable. Yet more, of course, does he detest an open challenge of that traditional pattern …[26]

The implication here is that market writers, like Black herself, were forced to appease this 'conventional reader' in order to sell their work. Her admiration for Hardy lay in his willingness to challenge these expectations, more specifically as he chose to do so with a portrayal of a female character that undermined socially conservative attitudes to women in contemporary realist fiction. Like many of her reviews, Black's response to *Tess* encompassed a much broader social commentary. She stated that the novel's

[26] Clementina Black, 'Mr Thomas Hardy's New Story', *Illustrated London News*, 9 January 1892, p. 50.

> essence lies in the perception that a woman's moral worth is measurable not by any one deed, but by the whole aim and tendency of her life and nature. In regard to men the doctrine is no novelty; the writers who have had eyes to see and courage to declare the same truth about women are […] [a] brave and clear-sighted minority.[27]

This assessment constituted a challenge to writers as well as to readers regarding the representation of women, as it suggested that the representation of women in literature had the potential to influence as well as reflect society.

Black's own writing tended to favour ways of accommodating women's independent action in narratives that were morally less confrontational than *Tess* but equally uncompromising. Middle- and upper-class women take primary roles in the plots of her novels, engaging with social, economic, and political questions, and holding distinct moral opinions, sometimes in defiance of authority. The eponymous heroine of *The Princess Désirée*, for example, is determined to take the throne of her kingdom in order to bring about a change in government; she states: 'I am not willing that my own little land shall be misgoverned as it is misgoverned now.'[28] Black's campaign writing addressed itself to middle-class women to ask for their engagement and activism to support underpaid working women. A challenge to mindless consumption, whether of literature or other products, was central here too.

As her fiction created settings in which women's talents and abilities were recognized, Black's campaign texts sought to show how women could put their abilities to practical use to produce social change. Her arguments in her campaign writing were often based on a recognition of the abilities and personal experience of her middle-class female readers; drawing on this experience, she drew parallels to make the socio-economic reality of working women's lives intelligible to her readers. In an 1890 article in the *Woman's World* entitled 'The Morality of Buying in the Cheapest Market', for instance, she called on middle-class women's knowledge of household work and

[27] Black, 'Mr Thomas Hardy's New Story'.
[28] Clementina Black, *The Princess Désirée* (London: Longmans, Green, 1896), p. 34.

management to help her readers understand the economic problems caused by sweated garment making. She then proceeded to invert a common contemporary narrative that cast female consumers as the cause of labour exploitation. For as long as the exploited needlewoman had been symbolic of the sweating system, commentators had argued that women who paid less for ready-made garments than they were worth drove prices down across the industry, causing the wages of the workers who made the garments to be lowered accordingly. Sheila Blackburn traces the blaming of 'unthinking females looking for a bargain' for the state of wages in the garment industry back to 1842.[29] Black's approach to this question of consumer responsibility was more practical and tactical: she evoked her readers' identity as consumers to propose a forerunner of modern-day ethical consumerism. The appeal of her proposal was that it empowered the woman as purchaser, recognizing the consumer's intelligence as well as her goodwill. In convincing her readers, Black did not rely on the evocation of pathos in the image of the worn-out seamstress familiar from popular works such as the ballad 'The Song of the Shirt' by Thomas Hood, which had gained widespread popularity after its first appearance in *Punch* in 1843. Instead, she appealed to her readers' own knowledge and experience, stating:

> We all know, roughly, the amount of time and labour involved in making this or that undergarment, by hand or by machine […], and we know, in the same approximate way, the cost of […] whatever the material may be. The simplest possible calculation shows us that most of the women who make these clothes cannot possibly live in health and comfort upon what they earn by this work. [30]

By encouraging her female readers to apply their reason and their own socio-economic experience to her narrative, Black invited their understanding and engagement with the broader social context of her article, and invited them to participate in an organized response to underpayment. This relied on a number of interlinking representative

[29] Sheila Blackburn, *A Fair Day's Wage for a Fair Day's Work? Sweated Labour and the Origins of Minimum Wage Legislation in Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 16, n. 10.
[30] Clementina Black, 'The Morality of Buying in the Cheapest Market', *Woman's World* (London: Cassell, 1890), pp. 42–44 (p. 42).

strategies. Black offered her readers a representation of exploitative labour practices that made it clear that this kind of employment must necessarily victimize workers. This offered scope for a new representation of the blackleg worker that did not rely on the emotive evocation of pathos, but did highlight that they were unlikely to have chosen to work under these conditions. Exposing the mechanisms of exploitation in this matter-of-fact way also allowed for a new way of representing consumer-readers to themselves: Black offered her readers a means of understanding the socio-economic situation that was intended not to shame them but to persuade them into acknowledging, and going on to resist, exploitative conditions.

Across her work Black aimed to point out social problems to her readers and appeal to them to contribute towards the amelioration of these conditions. This relied on the ability to make these issues relevant to her readers by identifying common experience and responses. In a contemporary character sketch of Black in the *Young Woman*, Mary Cameron stated: 'Whether she is advocating the claims of labour or of her own sex, she asks for "justice, not mercy." Equal opportunities for men and women, both rich and poor, freedom for each to develop and to make the best of their lives, is all she asks.'[31] The strategy Black developed in her published writing was to show her readers how the freedom of individuals and social groups to develop benefited society more generally. Thus, a woman who sought new career options and insisted on fair pay in her work set a beneficial precedent for other working women; and similarly, a woman who was conscious of the impact of her decisions as a consumer could exercise power to improve conditions for the producers of consumer goods. Much of the common experience Black identified in her appeals to her readers relied on her ability to highlight issues that were increasingly pressing for middle-class women as well as for working women. Underpayment and a lack of work opportunities affected women

[31] Mary Cameron, 'Clementina Black: A Character Sketch', *Young Woman: A Monthly Journal and Review*, June 1893, pp. 315–16 (p. 316).

across social classes, as did the burden of domestic work. Black was also an unequivocal adherent of the women's suffrage movement: her 'commitment to women's suffrage continued side by side with her social reform and literary endeavours until the vote was won'.[32] Each of these campaign objectives relied on the intellectual participation of women in initiatives to improve their social position. Black encouraged women to be the agents of social change to benefit themselves and others, and her experience as a market writer gave her both the skills and the platform to convey her point in the two strands of her publishing career.

Empowering readers: Black's fiction

Black's fiction was strongly consumer-centred, but it was by no means intended for mindless consumption. Although it rarely directly addressed the social and economic conditions that were the focus of her campaign writing, its representative strategies were similar to that in 'The Morality of Buying in the Cheapest Market': she set out to represent social problems to her readers, and to offer them an opportunity to see themselves as agents of social change. By showing the triumph of individuals over oppressive circumstances, Black's novels presented her readers with an idealized version of themselves and their own position that was designed to encourage them to pursue social change for the betterment of themselves and other women.

For the settings and scenes of her fiction, Black tended to draw on knowledge gained from other sources, ranging from her research on eighteenth-century history and literature, to her familiarity with the Sussex landscape and dialect, her experience of the workings of the labour movement, and her memories of touristic locations in

[32] Mappen, in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Black (1983), p. xiv.

Switzerland and Italy.[33] This is in keeping with the idea that she had recourse to fiction as remunerative labour: assimilating knowledge she already possessed into marketable commodities made efficient use of her time and abilities. On the other hand, these experiments with different settings also allowed her to play with other realities. Black's fiction reflects an experiment in investing blackleg work in literature with social meaning: while producing to the demands of the market, she also offered an escape from the social conventions of reality, creating opportunities for progressive imaginings. Exemplifying Black's understanding of her readership, these works push the boundaries of conventional narrative frameworks in order to advocate the rethinking of women's social roles through the depiction of capable, believable, and sympathetic female characters who play driving roles within the novels' plots. This section examines works from across Black's career to give an overview of her fiction writing as a space to develop her social aims and her intellectual interaction with her readers.

Glage identifies a genre split in Black's fiction, with her early stories depicting 'domestic realism' and her later work, from the 1890s onwards, becoming increasingly romanticized. She suggests that this stylistic development was at least partly an economic decision for Black, suggesting that she 'hoped to attract a larger audience and earn more money through romance […] and that her flights into fancy were a concession to [her] readers'.[34] While this may be the case, this section suggests that her use of unfamiliar settings may also be read as another representative strategy. Settings in which social hierarchies were suspended or changed offered scope for both Black and her readers to visualize alternative realities in which women were able to take an active part in social and political change. My examination of Black's two most deliberate attempts to address political subjects in her fiction, the novels *An Agitator* (1894) and

[33] On Black's use of Sussex as a setting for her novels, see Glage, p. 18. On her studies of the eighteenth century, see Glage, p. 20. On her visits to Switzerland in 1885 and Italy in 1886(?), see Glage, pp. 21 and 24 resp.
[34] Glage, p. 156.

The Princess Désirée (1896), highlights her experiments with genre in the representation of women's ability to respond actively to social and political questions.

Black began this social experimentation close to home. Her first published novel, *A Sussex Idyl* (1877), lives up to the generic ideas evoked by its title. It tells a Cinderella story about well-to-do London law student Oliver and Janey, the young relative of the farming family who give him houseroom when he sprains his ankle during a walking holiday in rural Sussex; the novel ends with their marriage. Within this conventional marriage plot, however, Black incorporated reflections on the class and gender hierarchies Janey and Oliver eventually transcend. Janey derives pride from steady adherence to her own moral code, putting moral righteousness before personal happiness, and this is what prevents her, for much of the novel, from accepting Oliver's attentions. She tells him that she fears the temptation of 'doing what I like instead of what's right'.[35] The admiration the novel invites for Janey's character is based on her independence of mind and strength of character; and Black deliberately contrasted this with what she called the 'orthodox ideal of clinging, shrinking, timid womanhood'.[36] Contrasting Janey's practical experience of work and domestic responsibility with the practical ignorance encouraged in the education of women in higher social classes, Black stated:

> The knowledge of needs and realities, which a woman of the upper or middle classes is ordinarily left to gather as she can in after life, had come to her [Janey] early enough to serve as a foundation — a standing-ground from which she could gain a clearer and truer estimate of life. And this knowledge — denied, as far as denial is possible, to girls — is of all knowledge the most needful to any human being whose life is to be clear, consistent, and useful. It is only in Eden that the knowledge of good and evil, and the need of work, can be dispensed with; but some dim idea yet lingers of keeping the maidens of the world from both these things […] We do our best to blindfold our maidens, and then we make it

[35] Clementina Black, *A Sussex Idyl* (London: Tinsley, 1877), p. 245.
[36] Black, *A Sussex Idyl*, p. 216.

> an article of belief that our women are too helpless to walk without a guide.[37]

Janey's idyllic rural environment has made her active, self-sufficient, and, most importantly, personally and morally self-reliant. As such, she serves as proof that women are not 'too helpless to walk without a guide'. This representation of Janey leaves some doubt as to whether the story itself, or rather its heroine, is the idyll of the novel's title. This idea of the idyllic continued to inform the representation of women in Black's fiction. Whether her settings were more or less realistic, the alternative realities she created were not far removed from popular contemporary utopian fiction, such as *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* by Edward Bellamy (1888) and *News from Nowhere* (1890) by designer and well-known socialist William Morris. In idealizing her female characters for their abilities and understanding, she allowed for the imagination of a society in which women could recognize and develop these qualities in themselves.

In the pastoral narrative of *A Sussex Idyl*, the fact that the hero is cut off from his normal social sphere by the injury that confines him to the farm gives the story some freedom from social hierarchy. Comparably, the country town of Dwininghurst functions as a protective environment for the eponymous heroine in the short story 'Topsy' (1880). The resolution of a quarrel with her lover prevents Topsy from having to seek work in garment-making or retail, which would have forced her to leave her bucolic home for an urban environment.[38] Both the city and the nature of the work Topsy proposes to pursue pose dangers of exploitation; in her own community, on the other hand, she can rely on support and respect. As Glage states, works like these 'show an entire world': the small communities within which they are set have their own social

[37] Black, *A Sussex Idyl*, pp. 196–97.
[38] Clementina Black, 'Topsy', in *Mericas, and Other Stories* (London: Satchell, 1880), pp. 145–79.

rules, and the heroine is able to develop her personal happiness with reference to these rather than broader social norms.[39]

In her later fiction, with the exception of *An Agitator*, Black struck further afield, choosing for her settings the English countryside of the eighteenth century, or the foreign backdrop of Germany, Switzerland, or Italy. These environments were variations on the pastoral detachment of her earlier works, but in these settings the social rules of Britain at the turn of the twentieth century were suspended. This created scope for romantic plots but also for the exploration of a different, more active role for her female characters and a more equal interaction between young women and men. The eponymous heroine of the novella 'Miss Falkland' has grown up travelling abroad, living in hotels, and is considered to be tainted by her father's reputation as an adventurer. The story shows her venturing into the Swiss Alps alone with a fellow hotel guest, and fantasizing about the freedom and simplicity of a romanticized working life in the mountains, which symbolize a 'wholesome and genuine' retreat from the socially stagnant and controlling environment of the hotels in which she has spent her life.[40] In *The Pursuit of Camilla* (1899), an Italian village setting offers freedom for English ladies. Camilla has travelled to Italy of her own accord in the mistaken belief that she is taking part in political intrigue; her aim is, as she puts it, 'to make Italy really free — to release the poor from undue taxation and from tyranny'.[41] The hero and his sister, Mr and Miss Allison, are English tourists in Italy; Guendolen Allison's independence is evident from the start as she undertakes excursions alone to photograph the village in which they are staying. Brother and sister both contribute to the plans for Camilla's rescue. While, in *A Sussex Idyl* and 'Topsy', it was the traditional rural settings that gave their heroines scope to exercise their strength of character, Miss Allison in *The*

[39] Glage, p. 83.
[40] Clementina Black, 'Miss Falkland', in *Miss Falkland, and Other Stories* (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1892), pp. 3–97 (p. 37).
[41] Clementina Black, *The Pursuit of Camilla* (London: Pearson, 1899), p. 91.

Pursuit of Camilla is strongly linked to modernity by her proficiency in the new technology of photography. Her independence does not come from an adherence to traditional female roles of responsibility, but has more in common with the freedom and mobility of the contemporary New Woman. Caroline Dalyngrange, the heroine of the eighteenth-century narrative *Caroline,* unites identities belonging to historical social structures and a more modern status-quo that, following the Married Women's Property Act (1882), was becoming more accepting of women in control of their own property: she is the heiress to an estate for which she takes social responsibility from an early age.[42] Glage's description of the role of the heroines of Black's historical novels, such as *The Princess Désirée* and *Caroline,* is also applicable to her more contemporary romances, including 'Miss Falkland' and *The Pursuit of Camilla*. Glage states:

> If the heroines of the historical romances accept the codes of their social groups with all the restrictions these codes impose, they also exhaust them to their full measure, thus laying open the deficiencies and restrictions of their respective worlds. They might thereby open new horizons to the readers belonging not to the 18th but to the 19th [and early twentieth] century.[43]

In other words, identifying social issues in different settings invited readers to recognize and question them in their own environment.

The social iniquities Black addressed in her campaign writing find no place in these idyllic imaginings, however. With *An Agitator,* she made a single attempt at writing a novel akin to social fiction, but the result is uncertain in its socio-political set-up. The novel follows Christopher 'Kit' Brand, a young engineer who first rises to prominence as a trade union agitator when he leads a local wireworkers' strike. He is forced to leave the wireworkers' union when the employers demand his departure during negotiations, and the members of the union agree to his going because, as they state, 'the wire-workers want a wire-worker for secretary, and not an engineer — even if

[42] Clementina Black, *Caroline* (London: Murray, 1908).
[43] Glage, p. 153.

he came down from heaven o' purpose'.[44] He then embarks on a political career, which culminates in the discovery of foul play in the counting of the votes when he stands for parliamentary election. He is imprisoned for fraud, and while his friends, outside the frame of the narrative, work to prove his innocence and bring about his release, his incarceration gives him the opportunity to think through the problems in his interaction with the working people he set out to represent. Yet while the personal persecution and moral awakening of the hero thus overshadow the political setting, the character of Brand proved unpopular: one reviewer described him as 'unconscionably dull'.[45] The focus on the protagonist's personal problems, then, superseded the consideration of existing social wrongs necessary in social problem fiction, but the choice of a stereotyped hero also precluded compelling romance.

By the time of the novel's publication, Black had begun to have doubts about the viability of the women's trade union project to which she had been dedicated since the 1880s. By 1893, Mappen indicates, Black and many of the WTUA leaders felt that '[t]rade unions for women […] were unstable and could not be relied upon to bring about social change'.[46] Nevertheless, Black stated that *An Agitator* had been written at the height of her engagement with the labour movement, 'fully three years' before its publication early in 1894.[47] The delay between the production and the publication of the novel could suggest that Black herself considered it an unsuccessful experiment in the representation of political responses to social problems and was therefore reluctant to publish it. She may eventually have done so for the income it would provide, or may have experienced difficulties in finding a publisher. On the other hand, it may be more productive to view the novel not as an anomaly in Black's fiction oeuvre, but rather as an example of the kind of socially, rather than politically, progressive fiction she had

[44] Clementina Black, *An Agitator* (London: Bliss, Sands and Foster, 1894), p. 25.
[45] 'New Novels', *Athenaeum*, 1 December 1894, p. 748.
[46] Mappen, in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Black (1983), p. ii.
[47] BL Add MS 46296, Clementina Black to John Burns, 1 November 1894.

been producing since the beginning of her writing career. Brand's prison epiphany is based on his individual development, and it is implied that greater personal compassion will make him a better agitator. He realizes that

> [h]e had toiled for men, but he had not loved them; he had given them his life, his joys, his intelligence, his youth, but he had never given them himself. For the woes and wrongs of humanity he had felt a passionate pity which had shaped his whole existence, but he had never put his arm within the arm of any ordinary man in the crowd and said, 'Jack, I feel so tired, so out of heart, but I know we must win by-and-by.' To be entirely aloof, entirely unmoved, entirely just, that had been his ideal of human relation for himself. His head sank down upon his hands, and he murmured, 'I gave them everything, except the only thing worth giving.'[48]

The message here is one of personal investment over political arguments, even of pity over strategy. It suggests that a sense of sympathetic unity could be forged from the admission of personal weakness. If the labour movement was merely a setting for a story about the potential and possibilities of individuals, rather than about class conflict, broader social analysis could be sidestepped, as in *A Sussex Idyl* and 'Topsy'. My reading of *An Agitator* explores this individualized narrative, and considers how it introduces socially progressive ideas without addressing political detail.

At first sight, the novel appears to resist individualization, both of the characters and of Black's own input. Lynne Hapgood states that 'Black holds to Engel's [*sic*] theory of literary types. Brand is "an" agitator, his distinctiveness is in his historical role and dilemma, rather than his actions and achievement.'[49] Glage explains that Brand is 'dull' because he is 'remarkably flawless', and this renders him 'statuesque, like marble' and ensures that he fails to be 'convincing' or 'humane' as a character.[50] Brand is not the only agitator of the novel's title, furthermore. Throughout the different stages

[48] Black, *An Agitator*, p. 181.
[49] Lynne Hapgood, 'The Novel and Political Agency: Socialism and the Work of Margaret Harkness, Constance Howell and Clementina Black: 1888–1896', *Literature & History*, 5.2 (1996), 37–52 (p. 48). On Engels's theory of the 'typical' in literature, see, for instance, Friedrich Engels, 'Letter to Margaret Harkness, Beginning of April 1888 (draft)', in *Marx & Engels on Literature and Art*, ed. by Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski (New York: International General, 1974), pp. 115–17 (p. 115).
[50] Glage, p. 131.

of his career, he relies for support on a group of friends motivated by sympathy with his cause, but also by personal loyalty to him. These diverse figures represent different social groups involved in the leadership of the labour movement, and they are agitators too. Richard Harris, the president of the wireworkers' union, is as much a professional trade unionist as Brand. The two are members of the Union of Amalgamated Engineers, chosen to organize the wireworkers because of their experience in a more established trade union. They receive practical support from Mr and Mrs Pelham, the local curate and his wife. Mrs Pelham is an educated woman from a political family, and she and her husband have turned away from establishment politics to agitate for the labour movement within the upper-class circles to which their social background and contacts give them access. At a further remove, Brand also receives personal aid from his biological father, an aristocrat and Liberal party grandee. As a subject of these influences, Brand's characterization becomes a sum of parts; he is absorbed by the movement to which he has dedicated himself. It is this lack of individuality, however, that is brought home to Brand in prison, where he realizes that being himself, rather than a political ideal, would have made him a better political leader. This supports the notion that Black was not seeking to give an accurate representation of the labour movement and its proponents, but rather to depict politics as a space for individual development.

For Brand, it transpires that personal engagement is key to political progress. While this is not necessarily representative of the practice of labour organization, it is in keeping with Black's own views at this time on the potential of the leadership of the labour movement to rise above distinctions of class and gender in what Livesey describes as 'the fellowship of labour'.[51] The labour movement in *An Agitator* seems to amalgamate the way men's and women's trade unions were run during the period.

[51] Livesey, *Socialism*, p. 56.

Brand and his associates combine aspects of both parts of the labour movement, as the interference of activists from higher social classes such as the Pelhams was more accepted in the women's movement, while the men's movement was predominantly led by skilled workers. Mrs Pelham resembles middle-class activists like Black herself and their role in supporting women's trade unions, and the involvement of Brand and Harris in the wireworkers' strike mirrors the role of labour activists like the engineers John Burns and Tom Mann in strikes of unskilled workers like the Dockworkers' Strike. While the representation of workers was crucial to Black's campaign writing, moreover, the striking wireworkers have no voice and no representative within the novel. This suggests that the story was more concerned with the personal development of Brand and his associates as agents of broad social change than with the theory and practice of trade unionism. Livesey shows that participation in the labour movement also fulfilled this role for Black herself. Describing Black's close collaboration with Burns during a strike of female workers in a confectionery factory in 1890, Livesey states:

> Black was thoroughly absorbed by her new identity, not as a lady taking a philanthropic interest in women workers, but as a labour 'agitator' in her own right, working for a cause that seemed to transcend gender. […] her account of the strike elides gender difference in favour of the fellowship of labour. She is just one of the 'agitators'…[52]

As in the novel, the shaping of the agitators' identity in Black's account of the Chocolate Makers' Strike for the *Fortnightly Review* relied on the contrast between them and the striking workers: the implication was that the presence of Black and Burns, and of the secretaries of the WTUA and the Confectioners' Union, was required to bring the strike to a successful close. Black stated that the four agitators, when they came to the aid of the factory workers who had staged a spontaneous walk-out, had 'taken up their cause and carried it through for them; but we have known that the way

[52] Livesey, *Socialism*, p. 56.

chosen, not by us, but by them, was not the best way'.[53] The agitators' preferred way, she explained, would have been the establishment of a strong trade union that could negotiate with the employers through the proper channels. She was adamant that industrial action of this kind could not 'be carried out successfully without a staff of at least two or three really business-like persons who are willing — and able — to work night and day if need be'.[54] A similar staff was introduced in the opening pages of *An Agitator*. Mrs Pelham first appears 'presid[ing] over the strike register' while Harris and Brand give her details of the striking workers' situations and pay out the funds.[55] It is almost as though it is their fellowship that brings about success in the labour movement, rather than the actions of the striking workers.

Livesey maps Black's activity during the Chocolate Makers' Strike onto the narrative of *An Agitator* to argue that the character of Brand is an amalgamation of Burns and Black herself, in order to account for the class and gender conflicts inherent in the relationship of the text to its author's experience, and in the presentation of the protagonist. Black's own correspondence certainly suggests that her admiration for Burns influenced the novel. She wrote to him in 1894: 'I wonder whether you will discover in it [the novel] a saying of your own which was in a way the germ of all of it.'[56] On the other hand, Black appears to have been determined that the novel should not be regarded as a *roman à clef*. On the first page of the published novel, appearing even before the title page, she inserted a dry disclaimer, stating: 'It may perhaps save a little time and ink, both to my reviewers and myself, if I say plainly beforehand that these pages contain no portrait of any person whatever' (Fig. 1).[57] Indeed, it is not necessary to read this novel as in any way autobiographical if, in keeping with the rest

[53] Clementina Black, 'The Chocolate Makers' Strike', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 August 1890, pp. 305–14 (p. 314).
[54] Black, 'The Chocolate Makers' Strike', p. 314.
[55] Black, *An Agitator*, p. 5.
[56] BL Add MS 46296, Clementina Black to John Burns, 1 November 1894.
[57] Black, *An Agitator*, unpaginated (p. 1).

of Black's literary project, the characters are intended to lead readers by example. Brand's personal journey allows him to become a better social and political influence, but his development as a character also allows for a re-evaluation of the class and gender hierarchies to which he is subject. More explicitly than in Black's other novels, the distinctions between individual fulfilment and political progress in *An Agitator* are blurred — as it is conceivable, from Livesey's explanation, that they were for Black when she became 'absorbed by her new identity' as an agitator. On the other hand, it transpires that the use of a more realistic political setting inhibited the freedom of development that the female protagonists of her other novels claim for themselves. This is particularly evident in the case of Mrs Pelham.

Lynne Hapgood suggests that while Brand 'was a vehicle for her [Black's] ideas', his masculine identity 'negated her female experience'.[58] Mrs Pelham is the novel's representative of the enterprising and educated middle-class women who were central to Black's writing: as well as the female protagonist of a fictional narrative who pushes the boundaries of her own social position, she resembles the potential activist to whom Black appealed in her campaign writing. In addition, she may be read as providing scope for Black to highlight her own experience as a woman in radical politics. Hailing from a political family and raised in close contact with parliamentary campaigning and rhetoric, Mrs Pelham is frustrated by a representational system that does not allow her to employ her political talents. During the early stages of Brand's political climb, she tells him:

> If I were one of my own brothers, I could have got into the House of Commons pretty easily. That's the place where you want soldiers to stand for Labour, and I, who would do it and could do it, am shut out.

[58] Hapgood, p. 49.

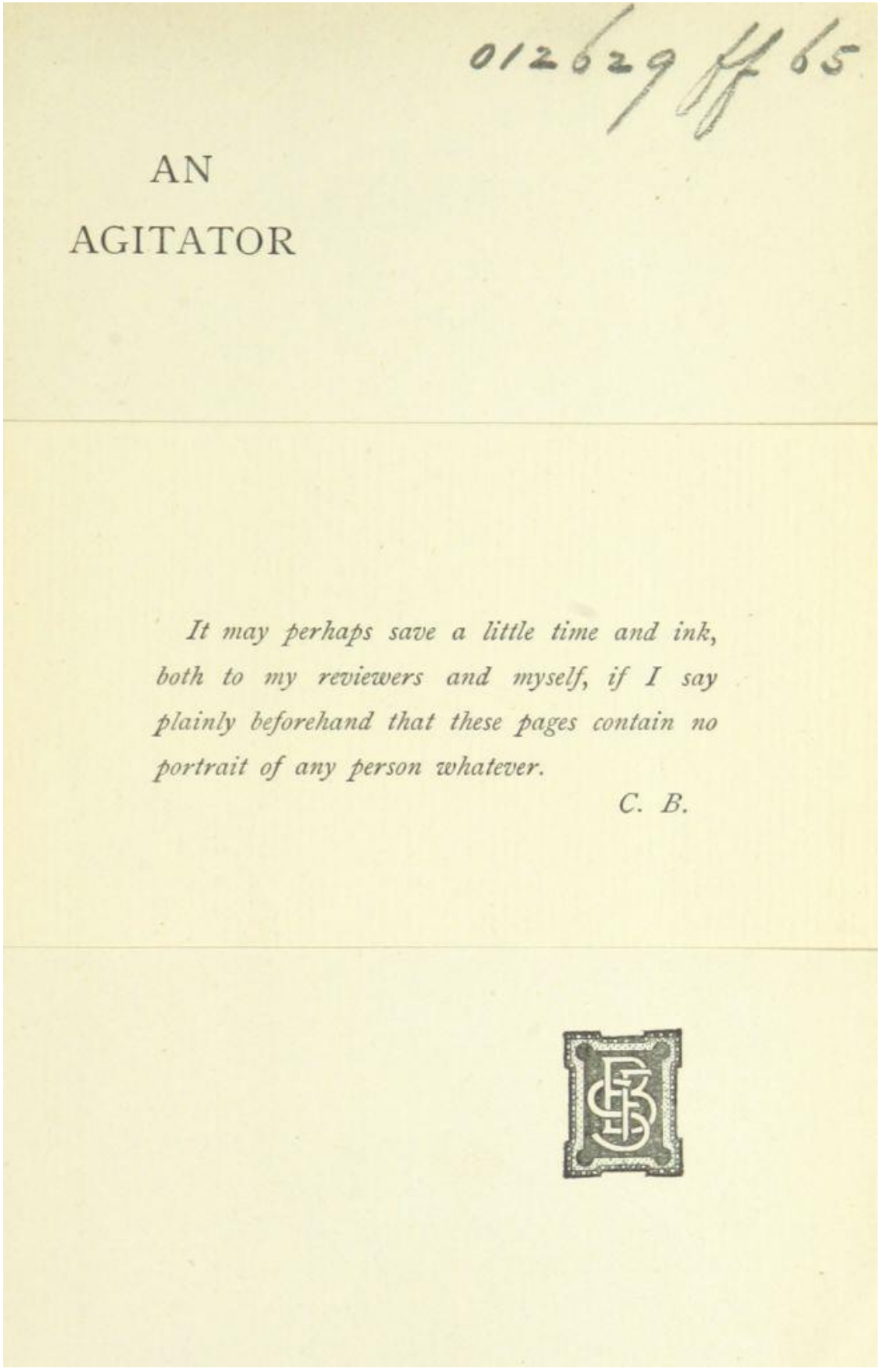

Figure 1: First page of *An Agitator* (London: Bliss, Sands, and Foster, 1894). British Library, London.

Brand accepts her grievance unequivocally, agreeing: 'Yes […] You would do it, and could do it; and there are not twelve men in England who will and can.'[59] Mrs Pelham articulates Black's determination to give women political power by means of the vote and to 'put women into public offices'.[60] In this way, *An Agitator* may be seen as attempting to pinpoint existing socio-political problems, rather than imagining ways out of them, as Black's other novels were able to do. On the other hand, Mrs Pelham's mutual understanding with Brand, and their recognition of a connection between their personal causes of class and gender equality, reflected a different attempt to imagine away differences of class and gender within the movement. Within their own circle, these characters, united in a shared cause, are able to overlook differences because of their personal appreciation of one another's qualities and social usefulness. In this sense, *An Agitator* worked to situate the broader social re-imaginings Black presented in the rest of her fiction in a contemporary realist setting. If this interpersonal recognition of individual qualities could exist within the labour movement — as Livesey shows it did between Black, Burns, and middle- and working-class members of the WTUA — a society restructured on the principles of this movement would necessarily include the appreciation of personal merit regardless of gender or class as well.

Black's next novel, *The Princess Désirée*, published two years later, featured a female protagonist unconstrained in the pursuit of her political aims by the laws and conventions that hem in Mrs Pelham. This lack of constraint is effected by a fictitious foreign setting and the genre of historical fantasy; in an environment that imagined a return to a pastoral, pre-industrial society, issues like labour politics did not appear. Unlike Brand, Désirée is an appealing and engaging protagonist, with a distinct personality of her own that helps to carry her cause and her story. This combination of a likeable protagonist and a make-believe setting freed Black alike from the complexities

[59] Black, *An Agitator*, p. 75.
[60] BL Add MS 46290, Clementina Black to John Burns, 19 October 1892.

of realism and from the disapproval of critics unwilling to accept her idealism in a political context, and allowed her to explore women's social and political potential on the scale of fairy tale. The story follows Ludovic de Saintré, a young diplomat dispatched to the fictional German principality Felsenheim to assist in arranging a marriage between Désirée, the heir to the country's throne, and a French duke. The princess's marriage to a foreign potentate would cut her out of the succession, ensuring that the country remain under socially and politically conservative control. Personal acquaintance with the people of the small country, and later with Désirée herself, convince Ludovic that the princess's rule would be more socially benign and progressive. He then becomes Désirée's close ally as she goes into hiding, rallies support, and finally takes the throne. The narrative was politically unthreatening as it included no plot to overthrow the monarchy; but Désirée's activities were socially and politically transgressive. It is she who declares her love to Ludovic at the end of the novel, and throughout the story it is clear that his role is to support her in her social and political plans. Désirée may be seen as the pinnacle of Black's female protagonists' search for personal development: her aims throughout the novel are audacious and she achieves them all, to the benefit of her country.

Livesey offers a convincing reading of *The Princess Désirée* as a political romance. From a premise comparable to Glage's observations on Black's use of historical romance, she observes:

> The year is 1847 and Black's novel remembers and reimagines the possibilities of that year on the cusp of revolution, constantly reminding the reader of the power of hope for the future, and the reach of historical change […] Black takes the historical forces — the truths of what might have been — in 1847 and 1848 and makes a future of possibilities within it [*sic*]: a space of playful, but still political, imaginings. […] the distance of time and place, the form of romance, allowed Black to exercise the counter-factual privilege and the pleasures of aesthetic production over the effortful struggles of political reform.[61]

[61] Livesey, *Socialism*, p. 70.

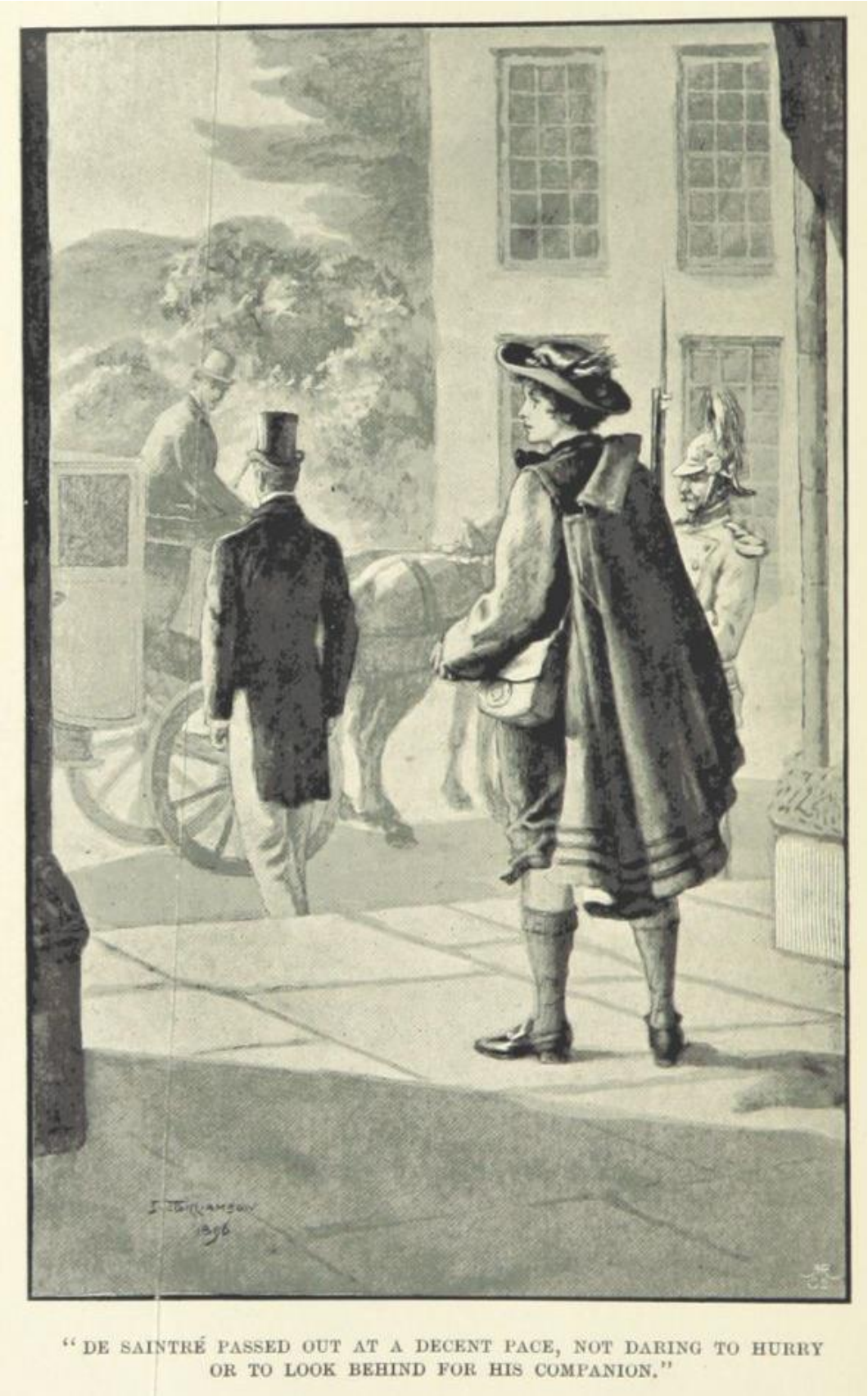

Figure 2: John Williamson, 'De Saintré passed out at a decent pace, not daring to hurry or to look behind for his companion', in *The Princess Désirée* (London: Longmans, Green, 1896), between pp. 76 and 77. British Library, London.

If the distance of the historical setting allowed Black to address political questions more effectively than she was able to do in *An Agitator*, *The Princess Désirée* is far from an historical tale: the immediacy of its narrative and the hopes expressed by its characters seem to suggest as much a future setting, comparable to the utopian novels of Bellamy or Morris. The illustrations by John Williamson that accompanied the first edition in book form are not easily fixed in a specific time period, taking on a fairy-tale atmosphere facilitated by the settings of palaces and cottages whose quaintness is rendered permissible by the foreign and fictional setting (see, for instance, fig. 2).

Within the terms of romance, Black was able to revisit several of the subversive interjections of her earlier work. The idea of rural working life as a foil to the conventions of polite society, expressed in *A Sussex Idyl* and 'Miss Falkland', emerged again in Ludovic and Désirée's friendship with a peasant family who support her bid for the throne. Early in the narrative, Ludovic reflects about the resourceful son of the family that '[t]his peasant boy, with his genuine enthusiasms, interested him much more than any of the civil-spoken automata of the court'.[62] Désirée determines that, when she comes to power, the matriarch of the family 'shall have the right of pasturage over the whole heath, and a fresh dozen of the best cows to pasture there'.[63] Ludovic's observation is a snide comment on empty social mannerisms and established political practice; but their personal and practical sympathy with the people of the small country also sets up confidence in the reader that the new rule of the princess will take into account the views and desires of her people.

Désirée and her situation allowed Black to address directly the position of women in the political sphere. There is an element of gender fluidity to Désirée's position, ambition, and her relationship with Ludovic, which is reflected in her decision to dress as a boy to escape the surveillance of the court and develop her plans to take the

[62] Black, *The Princess Désirée*, p. 42.
[63] Black, *The Princess Désirée*, p. 34.

throne. Williamson's illustration to a scene in which Désirée escapes from the palace disguised as a boy shows the cross-dressed Désirée almost in the centre of the frame, looking back provocatively at the reader who is in on her secret (Fig. 2). In contrast to Ludovic's austere nineteenth-century costume in the background, Désirée's flamboyant cloak, feathered hat, and buckled shoes are more reminiscent of earlier historical periods. Her dress may evoke comparisons to a musketeer, associated with personal and national loyalty and the swashbuckling pursuit of fairness and justice by the historical adventure novel *The Three Musketeers* (1844) by Alexandre Dumas, *père*. She could also be a cavalier; like the image of the musketeer, this would associate her with allegiance to the monarchy. The nods to traditional German dress in her costume — her feathered hat, sleeveless jacket, and cross-gartered knee-breeches — also give a sense of continuity and fidelity to national cultural traditions. In many ways, in fact, Désirée resembles a fairy-tale prince, an idea in keeping with her role in the story and her claim to the throne. She united the image and potential of a modern New Woman with the established literary genre of the adventurous quest narrative.

The princess's gender identity is explicitly discussed by characters in the novel in regard to her ability to take on the historically male role of ruler of the country. One of Désirée's band of faithfuls, a group of young aristocratic men, gives as his reason for supporting her: 'she has the stuff of a man in her, and I should like her to have a man's chance. I want her to be king here'.[64] Glage considers the fact that 'the ruler of the Grand Duchy of Felsenheim will be a female "king", not a queen' to be an 'idealization of the values of the ruling social class' as 'the reader is kept back in a male-created world' and '[n]o feminine counter-world arises'.[65] I read the comments of the narrator and the other characters rather as evidence that a woman is able to triumph in this 'male-created world' on masculine terms. The novel stopped short of allowing Désirée

[64] Black, *The Princess Désirée*, p. 129.
[65] Glage, p. 153.

to take part in the violence of the action: in a climactic scene, Ludovic puts himself between the princess and the sword of an attacker, and '[t]he thrust that was meant for her breast entered his'.[66] Nevertheless, Black emphasized at every opportunity Désirée's ability to hold her own in matters of state and, in particular, of diplomacy. She took the opportunity of a minor personal incident to muse: 'Into Ludovic's mind began to enter the idea, seldom evolved spontaneously in the mind of man, that a woman may be better able to defend herself than a man is able to defend her.'[67] In this sense, then, *The Princess Désirée* was as much a contemporary feminist narrative as a political fairy tale, showing a young woman equally capable as the men around her of navigating existing systems of government. In an echo of the conception of interpersonal relationships as transcending social barriers in *An Agitator*, the novel suggested that, by fostering fraternity and fellowship on an equal basis between women and men, aristocracy and peasantry, Désirée will be able to change the social order for the better.

Désirée's undisputed success may be contrasted with the efforts of the heroine of *The Pursuit of Camilla*, published three years later. The two protagonists, both enterprising and independent young women, have a great deal in common, but whereas Désirée is shown to be fully informed and in complete control of her situation, Camilla is duped into believing she can play a significant role in political intrigue. Financially and sexually predatory men play on her sense of family heritage and idealism to lure her into what she thinks is spying in the political cause for which her late father 'gave up everything' and was exiled from Italy.[68] She abandons her protective environment in Britain to travel to Italy and meet what she thinks are her father's political allies, only to be kidnapped on the orders of one of her father's relatives, who wants to force her into marrying him. A group of — mostly English — friends, including the Allisons, is

[66] Black, *The Princess Désirée*, p. 196.
[67] Black, *The Princess Désirée*, p. 166.
[68] Black, *The Pursuit of Camilla*, p. 88.

mobilized to rescue her. As in 'Miss Falkland', the foreign setting puts distance between the characters and the constraints of English society; but in this case it is to Camilla's benefit that her freedom is immediately curtailed where her English and feminine identities are concerned. A friendly barrister, hearing of her case, scoffs at the notion that a young woman in her position could be a 'free agent', insisting that she is '[n]othing of the kind! She is a minor, isn't she? Make her a ward of Court in no time.'[69] Like Désirée, however, Camilla is not a damsel in distress in need of rescue by a hero: despite the efforts made by the Allisons and others to trace and release her, she is ultimately not saved from the cousin who holds her hostage. Instead, she is set free by another family member, and makes her own way back to her now accepted lover. Both Désirée and Camilla are linchpins of an action-packed plot in which they move according to their own beliefs and values, but by removing the political aspect from Camilla's story, her peril is personalized and the story is stripped of broader impact. Black would use this structure again in *Caroline*, where the conflict between a group of Sussex landowners, including Caroline, and a neighbour, Mr Broughton, who leads a gang of smugglers that terrorizes the local population, is translated into the personal and sexual danger the villain poses to Caroline when he threatens to abduct her. Broughton's eventual conviction is brought about owing to this event, rather than to his earlier, less personal ill-doings. This personalization of social questions distances the protagonists from broader social issues in order to imagine possibilities for women's freedom; in this sense these novels appear to look back to *A Sussex Idyl*. Mrs Pelham laid a claim to women's political ability in *An Agitator* and *The Princess Désirée* lent it swashbuckling colour, but it is probable that these characters, with their direct access to the machinations of politics, were less identifiable for the readers Black hoped to reach and motivate to undertake their own push for social change. In spite of their imaginative

[69] Black, *The Pursuit of Camilla*, p. 53.

settings, the scale of her other novels may have been more relatable. Their protagonists are closer to middle-class female experience, and they seek to protect their families and households rather than to change their countries; but they nevertheless participate in processes of political and economic significance. Whatever their circumstances, Black's protagonists set an example of proactive engagement with their surroundings.

Black's fiction presented a series of imaginative experiments regarding the social position and possibilities available to talented and enterprising women. Her female characters strive for personal fulfilment as well as wider social improvement, not unlike her proposals in her 'Literary Ladies' speech and 'Type-Writing and Journalism for Women' which suggested that women's efforts to reject their blackleg identity and raise their own wages would benefit other women workers too. The novels discussed here recognized women's ability in the private and public spheres; in a diverse range of styles and stories, Black offered alternative social norms to allow female characters to make their talents useful, and encouraged her readers to interpret these alternatives as examples for a readjustment of contemporary social conventions. In this sense, Black's fiction imagined what her campaign writing urged, as she used the medium of popular fiction to direct the same persuasive writing skills towards the same readership in the hope of empowering them to fight for social change.

Writing working women: Black's campaign texts

While Black's fiction imagined worlds in which women wielded social influence based on their abilities, her campaign writing sought more practical ways for women to engage with contemporary social problems. Nevertheless, both relied on her conviction that women were able to play an active part in social change, and the recognition of women's abilities and understanding was central. Where her fiction had focused on the representation of middle- and upper-class female characters that her readers could relate

to, her campaign writing represented working women to the same readership. The emphasis of this work was therefore on the accurate depiction of working women's economic circumstances; but the characterization of the women themselves was equally important, not least in order to highlight experiences and concerns shared by the working women represented and the middle-class women who read the texts. Emma Francis suggests that 'Black goes further toward imagining a full, autonomous, and dignified subjectivity for the working-class woman, as both woman and worker, than many writers were able to do at this time, either inside or outside the novel', although she does speculate that it may be 'significant that [these portraits] are not situated within novels and so are not required to bear a narrative burden'.[70] I contend that these representations of working women do form part of a narrative, as accounts of their experience are intended both to reflect their economic conditions and to engage readers. Depicting the personal impact of financial pressures allowed Black to argue that women's work was both inevitable and necessary, and as such deserved adequate wages and conditions, so that women could break free from the oppression of blackleg work. If her fiction demanded respect for middle-class women's abilities, her campaign writing claimed recognition for working women's socio-economic role.

This section covers a range of Black's campaign texts in order to explore how she used her strategies for narrating poverty in the context of her changing priorities, from women's trade unionism to anti-sweating legislation. It explores how she used literary techniques to address the difficulties of documenting blackleg working conditions and to find alternative ways of explaining the effects of underpayment to her readers. Specific attention is devoted to two investigative texts produced by Black for the WIC: *Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage* (1907), which she wrote single-

[70] Emma Francis, 'Why wasn't Amy Levy More of a Socialist? Levy, Clementina Black and Liza of Lambeth', in *Amy Levy: Critical Essays*, ed. by Naomi Hetherington and Nadia Valman (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), pp. 47–69 (p. 54).

handedly, and *Married Women's Work* (1915), to which she contributed introductory and investigatory material. These texts mark a development in her representative strategies from her experiment of incorporating overtly political themes into her fiction. Instead, she was applying her strategies for portraying capable women to present her readers with representations of admirable working women whose blackleg identity prevented them from fulfilling their potential as workers.

Black experimented with genre and writing style in her campaign writing as well as in her fiction to find effective ways of narrating social problems to appeal to her readership. Social reportage, specifically as relayed by women and to a predominantly female readership, had developed as a genre over the course of the nineteenth century, and has been extensively investigated by scholars such as Patricia E. Johnson and Ruth Livesey.[71] Black's own awareness of the developing tradition of social writing was based on readings of British and international texts on blackleg working conditions. Her reviews of social investigation texts in a variety of languages show an awareness of the international economic situation and its attendant labour questions, and note the importance of representing these problems in a way designed to be understandable and engaging for readers. In a 1906 review of an American investigative text, *The Clothing Industry in New York* (1905) by economist Jesse Pope, she set out her favoured approach to writing social reportage. She described the text as

> a volume full of research [that stores], accessibly, a great accumulation of valuable facts; and it is perhaps ungrateful to complain that there is a lack of interest and of charm in the record. English readers have perhaps been spoiled by Sir Charles Booth and by Mrs. Webb, who combine with solid knowledge a delightful gift of literary presentation. That gift Professor Pope does not possess, and his volume is only likely therefore to be read by the very few persons who are specially interested in his subject. This

[71] Patricia E. Johnson, *Hidden Hands: Working-Class Women and Victorian Social-Problem Fiction* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001), and Ruth Livesey, 'Reading for Character: Women Social Reformers and Narratives of the Urban Poor in Late Victorian and Edwardian London', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 9.1 (2004), 43–67 <https://doi.org/10.3366/jvc.2004.9.1.43>.

> is a pity, because it would be immensely advantageous for the public at large to read and grasp the history that he has written.[72]

Pope's text, then, though accessible, was not sufficiently appealing to interest the general public in the social questions addressed. According to Black, 'literary presentation' was necessary to produce an account engaging enough to encourage consumers to read about a topic that they might consider to be unpleasant, or of no concern to them. Her remark that only 'the very few persons who are specially interested' would seek out this text indicated that investigators and activists should make a conscious effort not merely to write in their own discourse, but to reach out to other readers. Black's determination to present her campaign writing for a broad readership shows significant parallels with her fiction-writing project.

The representation of women's subjection to social injustice had been central to Black's campaign writing since the 1880s; but her trade union work had required her to focus on explaining working women's resistance to exploitation to a middle-class readership. As the Women's Trade Union Association developed into the Women's Industrial Council, the representation of the social problem of underpayment itself became more central to her campaign writing. As Mappen states, the WIC's priority was 'fact-gathering', a strategy that, she argues, 'enabled the new organization to continue its fight for women's economic rights in a manner more socially acceptable to the middle class'.[73] As the WIC developed out of the WTUA's general disillusionment with the gains made by women's trade unionism, however, the decision to focus on documenting underpayment itself had broader economic implications. The WTUA Annual Report for 1892–93 stated:

> The organisation of workers who are paid actually below a reasonable living wage — as many women workers are — is only possible in times of unusual hopefulness, such as that which immediately followed the

[72] Clementina Black, '*The Clothing Industry in New York*', *Economic Journal*, September 1906, 398–401 (p. 401) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2220817> [accessed 7 June 2015].
[73] Ellen F. Mappen, 'Introduction', in *Helping Women at Work: The Women's Industrial Council, 1889–1914* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), pp. 11–30 (p. 17).

> Dock Strike. Of course, meetings can be got up and members enrolled, but unless this attempt at organisation is very spontaneous, it may do more harm than good, and inspire in the long run rather a distrust of Trade Unionism than a faith in it.[74]

There is a consciousness here of the undermining influence of blackleg work on trade union activities. Publications by Black during this period indicate that she considered the ubiquity of blackleg work to be an important concern in the organization of low-paid workers. In her 1892 article 'Match-Box Making at Home', she described the opposition of interest between workers making matchboxes in factories and at home, and stated:

> I fear that no union can be effective in the main purpose of gaining better payment which does not include in one organization the boxmakers working in factories and the boxmakers working in their own homes. While they remain separated, each set of workers is competing with the other, and any demand for an advance on the part of one section will only result in throwing the work into the hands of the other.[75]

Black, here, was not precisely giving up on trade union organization, but she gave a strong indication that the WTUA's approach to unionizing could not address the full scale of the problem of underpayment, because it was unable to factor in the impact of blackleg work. The WTUA perceived a necessary link between the documentation of the problem of underpayment and the efforts of unions to combat it. It argued that

> periods in which the active business of organisation are [*sic*] perforce slackened, are periods in which information can be collected, and educational work carried on. Without such previous work the Unions formed, when better times come back, are not likely to be permanent.[76]

The collection of information on wages and working hours was necessary to allow organizing workers to frame their demands. As it transpired, however, the representation of this data was of crucial importance to make it intelligible.

In unregulated employment, establishing statistical details about working conditions and payment was difficult, not least because many workers were paid a

[74] '1892–3 Fourth Annual Report', in *Helping Women at Work*, ed. by Mappen, pp. 45–49 (p. 45).
[75] Clementina Black, 'Match-Box Making at Home', *English Illustrated Magazine*, May 1892, pp. 625–29 (p. 629).
[76] '1892–3 Fourth Annual Report', in *Helping Women at Work*, ed. by Mappen, p. 45.

piecework rather than an hourly rate. In ‘Match-Box Making at Home’, Black described the difficulties of collecting accurate information on home work. She explained:

> The real rate of pay for any work must be determined not by the price per piece as it seems to the outsider, but by the number of pieces that can be turned out by a skilled hand in an hour or a day; and this is a point difficult to arrive at, because most home workers work irregular hours and more or less intermittently. A married woman with children will tell you that she works from six o’clock till midnight, but when you come to examine more closely you find that out of that time some is employed in clothing and feeding the children. On the other hand it is more than likely that the children help in the work. It is not possible to measure the pay of such a woman. Another difficulty is that many women have no clear idea how many gross they make in a day, or how much money they take in a week.’[77]

In short, the lack of oversight and regulation in home industries, and the irregular nature of working hours and earnings based on piecework made it impossible to deduce a reliable indicator of the income of many home workers. Documenting these irregular figures and drawing conclusions about overall hours and wages in home industries was even more problematic. Often, workers were themselves unable to give a usable indication of their income, so that their testimonies conveyed primarily a sense of high pressure to produce and financial insecurity. Problems like these were common throughout the investigative projects of Black and the WIC, as becomes evident from the WIC’s ‘Home Work Survey’, an investigation of conditions in a variety of trades practised by sweated workers in their homes in London in the final decade of the nineteenth century. The survey itself is undated, but forms part of a collection dated 1890–1900. The survey data consists of handwritten notes compiled by the organization from the findings of different investigators. The columns of evidence indicate a standard series of questions; but the responses are far from standardized, and often reveal the irregular nature of the work. In the column recording the average productivity of home workers employed in fur pulling, for instance, each of the ten cases recorded shows a

[77] Black, ‘Match-Box Making at Home’, pp. 626–27.

different rate and pay, but also calculates the levels of output in a different way. Responses include:

> 1 Can earn 7/- a week working 10hrs. a day if works very quickly
> 2 Sometimes 100 skins Sometimes [*sic*] so hard to do 'can't only do a turn'
> 3 Earns sometimes 9/- sometimes 10/6 a week by 'opening skins' as well as pulling
> 4 Earns 1/- a day working 9 hrs.
> 5 About 1 turn a day
> 6 Takes average of 6/6 per week, working 9 hrs a day
> […]
> 9 1 turn a day — 'can't do more & that's the truth' works about 9 hrs.
> 10 Had done 100 in 12 hours.[78]

Some of these interviewees were optimistic about their output, giving the highest production levels they had achieved; others were pessimistic and pointed to the difficulty of the work; but very few were able to give a confident average of their earnings. The case is the same for the workers' responses when asked how much time they lost by fetching and returning the work they carried out at home. Responses include: 'Shop near but often kept 1 ½ hrs. "must wait one's turn"', '[c]hild takes & fetches Kept [*sic*] waiting "a good bit"', '[c]ouldn't say, but children fetch & take', and '[s]hop close. Has to take work back before 3 p.m. & is kept waiting for next supply but not long.'[79] While responses such as these give a valuable insight into the interviewees' working patterns and how their households were structured around them, what they do not provide is solid data on hours and wages on which calculations of averages could be based. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that it was difficult to organize workers like these: if they were unable to assess their own wages and working hours, it would be impossible both to determine a standard and to enforce it. The lack of reliable figures also made it difficult to quantify the problem for the benefit of observers: it would be difficult to show what quality of life these workers and their families could afford with their irregular incomes. Even in raw data such as the 'Home Work Survey',

[78] LSE, Women's Industrial Council collection, WIC/F/6.
[79] LSE WIC/F/6.

a sense of the problems inherent in sweated home work is conveyed rather by the tone of the anecdotal evidence than by any useable figures. Phrases such as 'can't do more & that's the truth' or 'must wait one's turn' give an indication of the strain of the work and the disempowerment of the workers. Black's representations of women workers often relied on details like these to engage readers.

Black's arguments regarding the position of working women share common elements with her representation of capable women in her fiction: both used examples of individual, admirable women to argue for a challenge to gender roles and the implications of women's blackleg identity. One early article for the *Fortnightly Review*, 'The Organization of Working Women' (1889), set out the unfairness of circumstances related to women's work, in a line of argument Black would continue to employ in her further work. She engaged with the effects of economic crisis as she examined unfair competition between male and female workers in the same industries and the low wages paid to women that undercut men's labour. Addressing the roots of the gender pay gap, she wrote:

> Roughly speaking, when the work of women did not represent money — when it was not a commodity for the market — it was not treated with the same respect and consideration as that of men. Nay, the lingering tradition that women do not, or should not, work for money, still causes their work to be treated with less regard, and by this very circumstance helps to prevent it, in too many cases, from rising to an equal standard of efficiency with that of men.[80]

There appears to be a curious conflation here of the financial positions of middle-class women working for economic independence, and working-class women supporting themselves and their dependants, which is largely reflected in the apparent assumption that women's working for wages was a relatively new phenomenon. Much of this apparent misrepresentation may be ascribed to the fact that Black was simultaneously responding to middle-class arguments that condemned women's paid work as disruptive

[80] Clementina Black, 'The Organization of Working Women', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 November 1889, pp. 695–704 (p. 696).

to family life, and to working-class arguments that women's participation in the workforce would lower wages. She sought to make clear to both groups that women's work deserved to be valued equally with that of men, and that this would improve the position of both female and male workers.

The fear that women would undercut wages if they worked in the same trades as men was widespread in the late nineteenth century. It is reflected in an 1891 article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on a strike of post office workers entitled 'The "Woman Blackleg"?'. The article noted that 'among the strikers' list of grievances' was 'the employment, or the increased employment, of women in the department'. Women workers were presented as undermining the demands of the male workers because

> [t]hey are, of course, paid less, for their price in the market is lower; and most of them are probably too glad to get work at all to be likely to give themselves airs if asked to do more than seven hours.[81]

Because women were willing to accept lower wages and longer hours, the article stated, the post office aimed to replace male with female workers wherever possible; these women workers were therefore seen as undermining the working standards of men. The article's observation that women were 'glad to get work at all' corresponds with Andrew August's statement that 'women formed a convenient surplus of labour on which the sweated system of production depended'.[82] Like employers of sweated labour, the management of the post office took calculated advantage of women's blackleg identity; and the organized male workers responded by closing their ranks against the 'woman blackleg'. Kristina Huneault explains that, over the course of the nineteenth century, the 'ideology of the male breadwinner and the concept of the family wage' had become entrenched across social classes, and disadvantaged women workers

[81] 'The "Woman Blackleg"?', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 January 1891, p. 1.
[82] Andrew August, *Poor Women's Lives: Gender, Work, and Poverty in Late-Victorian London* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999), p. 101.

in their efforts to organize for improvement in their own working conditions.[83] She states:

> from a middle-class perspective there was an inherent incompatibility between the identities of 'woman' and 'worker'. For many working-class men, however, women and paid employment were understood to be only too compatible. Fears of job-loss and undercutting were constant factors in working men's relation to their female co-workers. Considered from this perspective it was not the identity of 'worker' but that of 'trade unionist' that often came to exclude women.[84]

In other words, it was almost impossible for women who undertook paid work to escape the role of blackleg. The solution that Black proposed was not to prevent women from working, but to insist on adequate remuneration for their work. This argument that fair pay would simultaneously alleviate poverty and prevent undercutting resonates through both *Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage* and *Married Women's Work*.

Although Black presented her arguments for fair pay on an economic basis, her use of portraits of working women to appeal to her readership often creates the impression that working women deserved adequate payment not merely as the fair economic return for their labour, but because their characters invited admiration. The complexities inherent in these attempts to defend working women on their own terms while making them appealing to middle-class readers are evident throughout Black's campaign writing. Like her review of *Tess* the year before, her article 'The Dislike to Domestic Service' (1893) opened with a confrontational tone. She stated that young working women were reluctant to work as domestic servants, and that 'there is a certain inclination on the part of persons who find this dislike inconvenient, to preach against it as a sort of depravity'. Black dismissed these criticisms and asked employers of domestic staff to acknowledge that 'these young women — like other classes of working people — understand their own needs and their own discomforts a great deal

[83] Kristina Huneault, *Difficult Subjects: Working Women and Visual Culture, Britain 1880–1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 7.
[84] Huneault, p. 169.

better than these are understood by their middle-class critics'.[85] Having stated that the average middle-class commentator should not presume to understand the motivations of these young women, however, Black went on to give an explanation for their motivations that was calculated to fit into middle-class discourse. She emphasized the young women's attachment to their family and community, and invoked social as well as sexual morality when she explained:

> If the longing for [equal companionship, change, and freedom] does not find gratification in safe and permitted ways, it is likely to make for itself ways that are dangerous and prohibited. This isolation, in which many servants live, remote from the restraining public opinion of their relations and their own social class, removes more than one safeguard, and leaves them exposed to dangers little realised by benevolent persons who, judging other households by their own, regard domestic service as the safest of all callings.[86]

Black appears to be issuing an invitation to class rapprochement by encouraging her readers to muster personal understanding for these working women, even as she claimed to be destabilizing middle-class assumptions. She asked her readers to respect the autonomy of young working-class women, but justified their autonomy in terms designed to appeal to a middle-class readership. In this way, her portrayals of independent working-class women resemble her depictions of enterprising female characters in her fiction: they posed a challenge to social norms, but were no threat to moral discourse.

Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage tried to combine a similar appeal for middle-class sympathy for working women with a claim for their right to fair remuneration. Published in 1907, the volume played into a revival of interest in (especially women's) sweated home work following the 1906 'Sweated Industries Exhibition', sponsored by the *Daily News* and organized by the WIC. The text opened with a description of young female factory workers and their empowerment through

[85] Clementina Black, 'The Dislike to Domestic Service', *Nineteenth Century*, March 1893, pp. 454–56 (p. 454), *British Periodicals Collection I* <http://search.proquest.com/docview/2652606?accountid=9735> [accessed 15 June 2015].
[86] Black, 'The Dislike to Domestic Service', p. 455.

economic independence but, as with the young women described in 'The Dislike to Domestic Service', there is a sense that they must be shown to be unthreatening to her readership. Black described 'the factory girl as I have known her and delighted in her' and ascribed to these workers an innate sense of justice, community, and work solidarity which, it was implied, gave them the right to be met 'on equal terms'.[87] These independent young women, however, were not the focus of the text; Black's acquaintance with them dated from 'the days when some of us still believed in the possibility of organizing unskilled women'.[88] Instead, the reference to the strength of character and potential for personal development of young working women functioned only to evoke extra pathos when Black shifted her concern to a less self-sufficient class of working women, namely women with families. Being responsible for dependants meant that these women lost their financial independence; as caring for their families kept them at home, they became sweated home workers to supplement the household income. This loss of work as a means to independence, for Black, underlined the hopelessness of her original trade union project; as sweated workers, these women 'are tired out; they toil on, but they have ceased to look forward or to entertain any hopes'.[89] There is an emphasis on the idea of wasted potential in these women; and Black, in this text, addressed with vehemence the strain of domestic drudgery and the double shift of paid labour and household work that she identified as hampering women's development. She explained that

> [t]o be the wife of a casual labourer, the mother of many children, living always in too small a space and always in a noise, is an existence that makes of too many women, in what ought to be the prime of their lives, mere machines of toil, going on from day to day, with as little hope and as little happiness as the sewing machine that furnishes one item in their permanent weariness.[90]

[87] Clementina Black, *Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage* (London: Duckworth, 1907), pp. 134, 135.
[88] Black, *Sweated Industry*, p. 135.
[89] Black, *Sweated Industry*, pp. 137–38.
[90] Black, *Sweated Industry*, p. 138.

With its evocation of domestic confinement and the limitation of women's development this passage suggests that these working women's experience reflected that of middle-class feminist readers. The appeal to the reader to help these women workers rested on a sense of identification across classes.

In *Sweated Industry*, Black largely confined this focus on personal detail to the opening pages, and quickly moved her argument on to economic reasons against sweating and for a minimum wage. Making clear that the social problem of sweated work did not impact solely on women, she referenced research covering male and female workers in a range of trades, and revealed the global nature of the problem. Her acknowledgments, for instance, indicated that her 'old friends', the writer and women's rights campaigner Laura Bogue Luffmann and the political activist Henry Hyde Champion, had collected information for the book in Australia.[91] Summing up the problem, she stated:

> The evil [of sweating] is thus not confined to women, nor to home workers, nor to any class or trade. Nor is it confined to any one country. Nearly every instance quoted [in the volume] could be matched from Germany and from America. 'Sweating,' in short, invariably tends to appear wherever and whenever industry is not either highly organised or else stringently regulated by law.[92]

This summary took in a variety of ways to combat sweating; Black made no further reference to her trade union work, but the question of underpayment as a cause of poverty remained central. Her analysis emphasized that blackleg work was a product of underpayment, and that it perpetuated itself in unregulated employment, making it impossible for workers to break away from their blackleg identity.

Having made clear that blackleg workers worked hard but were simply unable to attain a reasonable quality of life on the wages they were paid, Black's conclusions followed up her combination of personal appeal and economic reasoning with a rebuttal

[91] Black, *Sweated Industry*, p. v.
[92] Black, *Sweated Industry*, p. 143.

of philanthropic projects. Her focus was on the social theories of Helen Bosanquet of the Charity Organization Society. Emphasizing the social problems caused by underpayment, she stated:

> Not inefficiency but poverty is the real disease, and since poverty is an inevitable result of unlimited competition in labour, the disease can only be cured by some interference with the free course of competition. How to apply such interference effectually is the real problem which organised society has to solve.[93]

The problem, then, was not workers' inability to manage their income, but the lack of regulation in labour to ensure that they had a regular and fair income to manage. Social schemes like Bosanquet's, according to Black, failed to address the concern of underpayment, because they 'never acknowledge[d] the character of the problem'. For Bosanquet, Black stated,

> there are only inefficient people to be taught better, not underpaid people to be paid better. In this respect she represents a considerable school of thought […] since any writer is pretty sure of welcome who preaches a doctrine so soothing to the general conscience. Much sympathetic distress would be spared to all of us, and much racking of anxious brains to a few, if it were but possible to believe with Mrs Bosanquet that the poor are themselves the architects of their own poverty and that they must themselves be its physicians.[94]

Black's reference in this passage to the impact of writing and reading in the dissemination of information regarding social problems recalled the image of the reader who did not wish to have their conscience disturbed. Although she was willing to use pathos to appeal to middle-class readers, and her aim was to motivate these readers to help the disempowered workers she had described, Black resisted the patronizing assumption of commentators like Bosanquet that the problem lay with the workers, rather than with the system that exploited them.

The question of personal appeal is also important in *Married Women's Work*, a collection of reports by WIC investigators edited and introduced by Black. The research

[93] Black, *Sweated Industry*, p. 159.
[94] Black, *Sweated Industry*, p. 159.

for the collection was carried out in 1909–10, soon after the publication of *Sweated Industry* and *Makers of our Clothes*, the 1909 investigative text on home workers in the textile industry that Black co-wrote with reformer, philanthropist, and women's rights activist Adele Meyer. The Council's priorities in its reportage are reflected in an article from its quarterly, the *Women's Industrial News* (*WIN*), from 1910, announcing the near completion of the 'Married Women's Work Enquiry'. Recounting the progress of three of its investigators, the article emphasized that the 'reports are extremely full, not only of plain facts about work and wages, but also of most interesting human details' which provided 'a picture of [working women's] lives from the inner side'. Alongside the facts and figures gathered, the investigation also showed 'much insight into the problems and difficulties which beset the path of wage-earning mothers'.[95] Although it appears to have a good deal in common with *Sweated Industry*, the tone of the collection is significantly less confrontational, and reflects an uncertain relationship with conservative domestic ideology. The *WIN* hinted that some of the researchers involved tended towards the idea that married women should not work. With reference to Gertrude Atkins's research in Lancashire and Cheshire, the article pointed out that '[s]he is frequently told that if the husband were sure of regular wages the wife would never go out to work'. It also stated that Dorothy Lenn, carrying out an investigation in Leicester, 'was instructed to visit every tenth house, to find out if the wife were a wage-earner, and if possible the reason of this'.[96] This underlying assumption places the text in some tension with Black's views on the necessity of women's work; as Mappen states in her introduction to a 1983 edition of *Married Women's Work*: 'In her classification of married working-class women, Clementina Black clearly considered those women who needed to work but did not inferior to those who did work, whether

[95] 'Investigation Committee', *Women's Industrial News*, July 1910, p. 5.
[96] 'Investigation Committee'.

they needed to or not'.[97] In either case, however, the representation of the working mothers' personal circumstances was deemed important to help readers understand the importance of their paid work.

Black's contributions to the volume certainly reflect a degree of impatience with assumptions of class and gender that had been revealed as outdated by the First World War. Considerable delays took place before the text could be published; Black's correspondence with Ernest Bell of George Bell and Sons, who eventually printed the text, did not commence until 1914, suggesting some difficulty in finding a publisher.[98] Black's preface to the text noted that '[t]he delay in the publication of the Report has been due to many causes, of which the latest is the European war', but added that '[t]his delay is not one by which the book suffers'.[99] The sentiments in the *WIN* article give some context to her explanation. She stated:

> up to the outbreak of war the conditions described [in the volume] continued to prevail. These conditions of Englishwomen's life and industry later events have shown to be unequal to the strain caused by the war. It is hoped that a detailed realisation of what these conditions were may be a real help towards that immense social reconstruction which is now seen to be needed.[100]

The social and economic changes wrought by the war, already becoming apparent at the time of the book's publication in 1915, entailed the greater absorption of both men's and women's labour into an official workforce receiving higher wages, as opposed to an economy in which sweated home work was the result of a flooded labour market and high male unemployment. The question of whether women should work, which had so occupied the middle class in the nineteenth century, rapidly became moot.

The introduction to *Married Women's Work*, with its references to domestic ideology as ingrained, reads as though it had been written nearer 1910 than 1915, but in

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[97] Mappen, in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Black (1983), p. xi.
[98] For an explanation of the internal disagreements in the WIC and the delay in the publication of the volume, see Mappen, in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Black (1983), pp. viii–ix.
[99] Clementina Black, 'Preface', in *Married Women's Work, Being the Report of an Enquiry Undertaken by the Women's Industrial Council*, ed. by Clementina Black (London: Bell, 1915), pp. v–vi (p. v).
[100] Black, 'Preface', in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Black, p. v.

it Black's views on women's work as set out in *Sweated Industry* are only slightly tempered by the awareness that this was a collective WIC text. Its opening set out to challenge what she perceived to be 'a general opinion and especially, perhaps, among persons of the middle class, that the working for money of married women is to be deplored'. She then outlined the attempts of conservative middle-class ideology to incorporate and account for the fact that married women did work:

> That such work is sometimes made necessary by poverty will be conceded, and wives who earn because they must are pitied; while wives who work not for their own or their children's bread, but rather for butter to it, are regarded as at least somewhat blameworthy.[101]

This framing of the question undermines a perceived idea of praise for suffering in the cause of morality, which implied that women should not wish to add to the family income in order to provide their children with 'butter to their bread', meaning any small extras that might go some way towards lifting the family out of extreme poverty. Black ridiculed this idea, and went on to explain why: 'The underlying implication seems to be that a wife and mother who thus works must be withdrawing from the care of her home and her children time and attention of which they are really in need.'[102] Black's indignation again took a middle ground between challenging and embracing middle-class ideology. She refuted the middle-class notions she considered uncomprehending of working women's economic and social needs, but did so with reference to middle-class family ideals, stating: 'No "driving" foreman, no greedy employer, can so spur the efforts of a worker as her maternal affection spurs such a woman, and her too laborious days are embittered by the knowledge that success is after all impossible.'[103] On the other hand, this emphasis on family responsibility was also cast in economic terms. Black encouraged her readers to identify with working women on the basis of a shared ideal of personal freedom in financial independence. She stated: 'That wave of desire

[101] Black, 'Introduction', in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Black (1915), pp. 1–15 (p. 1).
[102] Black, 'Introduction', in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Black (1915), p. 1.
[103] Black, 'Introduction', in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Black (1915), p. 3.

for a personal working life which forms so marked an element in the general development of modern women touches and inspires even those humble and overdriven toilers.' More than the cross-class ideal that Black hinted at, however, comes forward in her observation that 'the woman who said: "A shilling of your own is worth two that *he* gives you" spoke the mind of many of her sisters'.[104] The suggestion here is that what working women valued in economic independence was the fact that, if the money was their own, the decision on how to spend it also became theirs. This allowed them to respond independently to the needs of their families as they recognized them.

Black's classification of the working women whose situations were explored in the text went on to describe the women who, unlike the 'humble and overdriven toilers' forced to work 'for their children's bread', chose to work for 'butter to it'. With a clear jab at the idea of moral and respectable poverty that she addressed in her opening paragraphs, she called them 'those reprehensible women who could if they chose afford to live upon their husband's earnings but yet devote many of their hours to paid work'. She proceeded further to undermine the notion that these women deliberately deprived their household and their children of essential care by stating that these usually 'highly skilled and well remunerated' women often 'pay for domestic help' in order to ensure that their household would not suffer, and went on to show that 'the great majority buy educational advantages for their children; [and] very often they are able to provide health-giving holiday outings'.[105] This suggests that these women carried out, in many respects, middle-class philanthropic ideals: they practised a feminine, family-centred version of the ideals put forward by Samuel Smiles in *Self Help* (1859) as their income took the place of philanthropic contributions towards the advancement of their children. They worked to raise their children to a better position than they themselves occupied, and provided for them the 'health-giving holidays' that were an ideal of many

[104] Black, 'Introduction', in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Black (1915), p. 4, emphasis in original.
[105] Black, 'Introduction', in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Black (1915), p. 7.

philanthropic societies concerned for the health of children living in crowded and polluted urban areas. These working women, then, were far removed from the victimized home workers of *Sweated Industry*. They were more comparable to successful middle-class women providing for their own independence, as, according to Black, they 'are nearly always conspicuously competent and are marked by an independence of mind which I believe to be derived from the consciousness of their power of self-support'.[106] In this competent self-reliance, they were not unlike the heroines of Black's novels, such as Janey, Désirée, and Caroline.

The same type of capable and courageous working woman had featured in some of Black's trade union writings, including a young working mother who related her success in setting up a union in 'A Working Woman's Speech', published in the *Nineteenth Century* in 1889.[107] These strong and responsible women represented the benefits of adequate payment for women's skilled work, which appeared as a further argument to raise women's wages generally. Low pay, Black made clear, 'is not an evil inherent in the work'. Instead, she argued, the evil was the burden that the combination of professional and domestic work placed on working women, and this was what 'organised society' should endeavour to alleviate, not least in order to allow these women 'breathing space for a little personal life' as well.[108] In order to secure this independence, Black expressed herself in favour of women's work after marriage, and argued that 'wives who work solely at domestic duties' should be endowed 'with a legal claim to a fixed proportion of the family income'.[109] This recognition of domestic problems and their impact on women's access to family funds was another strong argument against the suggestion that it was in any way immoral for working women to want their own disposable income. *Married Women's Work* showed the constancy of

[106] Black, 'Introduction', in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Black (1915), p. 7.
[107] Clementina Black, 'A Working Woman's Speech', *Nineteenth Century*, May 1889, pp. 667–71.
[108] Black, 'Introduction', in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Black (1915), p. 8.
[109] Black, 'Introduction', in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Black (1915), p. 14.

many of Black's fundamental ideas regarding justice to working women's needs and desires. As Mappen states, the text overall gives an idea of 'the "type" of working-class woman that middle-class feminists admired and with whom they felt most comfortable'.[110] Black used this 'type' to win over progressive middle-class thinkers to sympathy and understanding for working women's circumstances more generally, but in this recognition is evident a willingness to challenge gender norms in ways not confined solely to middle-class women's independence.

The range and frequency of Black's publications provide copious evidence of the changes to which her social and political ideas were subject; so far from distancing herself from earlier standpoints, there is an element of self-evaluation throughout her work as she tried to persuade her readers to follow her ideological changes. Her framing of the delayed publication of *Married Women's Work* as a reflection of the bad old days and the socio-economic circumstances that must be changed in the restructuring of society that she felt must necessarily follow the First World War show a revival of optimism at the possibility of change after the horrors of war. In her final book-length publication, *A New Way of Housekeeping* (1918), Black envisioned a radical overturn of domestic conventions through a system of cooperative laundries, kitchens, and childcare. These plans for social restructuring drew on many of the notions which underpinned the socialist idealism practised by Black and her sisters during the 1870s and 80s, when they established a household together in London in which they did their own domestic work without employing servants. Ana Parejo Vadillo states that the sisters' domestic arrangements constituted 'a rejection of bourgeois attitudes they so much criticised, in so far as they rejected the comfort of the middle classes', as well as 'an attack on the division of classes, because they refused to have servants' and 'a

[110] Mappen, in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Black (1983), pp. x–xi.

frontal attack on Victorian gender attitudes'.[111] These convictions are embodied in the ideas on the reserve of female labour and lack of professional training for women that Black put forward in *A New Way of Housekeeping*: the title of the second chapter of the volume asked 'Why Not Be Servantless?'.[112] Black stated that, at the end of the war,

> [t]he only labour reserve upon which [Britain] can reckon consists of women who have not hitherto been employed in economically profitable work. Of these the greatest number have been engaged in some branch of housekeeping. Any reorganisation of housekeeping, therefore, which, without relaxing family ties or diminishing domestic comfort, releases women for other occupations will be of national benefit.[113]

This observation, and the text which follows, evoked ideas of the capable wage-earning mothers of *Married Women's Work*, and addressed the domestic burden of what this text calls 'double shifts' as hindering women's personal development and consequently their usefulness, in this case to a state that would come to rely on them economically.[114]

Framing housekeeping as a business and domestic expertise as the skills of a trade, Black proposed a scheme of centralized domestic training and household management, hoping finally to free women for other forms of training and paid work. Although it proposed a radical change to traditional household structures, *A New Way of Housekeeping*, like virtually all of Black's earlier work, drew on middle-class values to suggest ways of improving society so that it could allow for a better implementation of those values: this is reflected by her emphasis on family ties and domestic comfort. Tying her work into war effort rhetoric, too, Black deplored the amount of waste incumbent on domestic planning per household unit: 'waste of labour, waste of time, waste of money, waste of consumption, and an infinite unnecessary reduplication of tools and processes'.[115] Thus, the need for social restructuring after the war seemed to provide an opportunity for Black to restructure her own core ideas on social problems

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[111] Ana Parejo Vadillo, *Women Poets and Urban Aestheticism: Passengers of Modernity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 53.
[112] Clementina Black, *A New Way of Housekeeping* (London: Collins, 1918), p. 10.
[113] Black, *A New Way*, p. ix.
[114] Black, *A New Way*, p. 8.
[115] Black, *A New Way*, p. 16.

such as the checks on women's training and development and the burden of domestic work.

Black's campaign writing, then, shows the application of many of her literary skills, predominantly the intellectual interaction with her readers. Her portraits of working women conformed in part to middle-class norms but, as with her fiction, the invitation to identify with them was based on a shared experience of repressive socio-economic conditions that caused women's talents and work to be undervalued. The aim was to motivate readers to take action against these social problems across social classes. Although Black's work reflects tensions between identification with and condescension to the working women portrayed, overall her recognition and understanding of economic necessity on a personal as well as an abstract level allowed her to create a compelling narrative about blackleg work, and specifically women's blackleg status, as a social and economic problem that proved difficult to document in other ways.

Black's popular counter-canon: conclusions

The diverse readings of Black's work by the critics cited in this chapter show that, as a writer, she is difficult to categorize. This is due, in part, to the sheer extent of her writing career, which defies attempts to prioritize one element of it over another. Because she relied on the income from her publications, both her fiction and her campaign work were produced for immediate consumption by her readership. Economic analysis thus straightaway became a necessary element in Black's understanding of writing for publication; she was strongly aware of the literary market and its exploitative workings which made writers like her into blacklegs by offering low prices for their work, encouraging them to undersell other writers. This style of writing sustained Black during her working life, but did not make her wealthy: she died

'possessed of 39 pounds'.[116] Her literary work cannot be dismissed, however, as an inferior parallel career to her activism.

Black's fiction and campaign writing drew on the same strategies, readerships, and publishing platforms in order to imagine and propose alternative social structures. Both strands of her writing appealed to middle-class women as agents of social change; but both also allowed her to narrativize social problems that were difficult to record and relate in other ways, such as the social and economic gender inequality that helped to create conditions of blackleg work. Conveying her understanding of these issues in narrative form allowed her to show her readers how the structural undervaluing of women's work meant that most work available to women was paid at rates that necessarily undercut other workers. Fiction like *An Agitator* and *The Princess Désirée* allowed her to imagine political systems that recognized women's abilities and allowed them to participate in bringing about social change. In her campaign writing, appealing portraits of working women personalized the problem of underpayment. These women and their experience stood in for other forms of documentation that could not accurately reflect the variable conditions of women's work, and of sweated home work in particular, and the involuntary nature of women's identity as blackleg workers. Black's counter-canon was based on recognition of the subjectivity and abilities of both the women she portrayed in her writing and the women to whom she appealed as readers. From these foundations, she proposed possibilities for solidarity in spite of the social structures that imposed blackleg conditions on women's work.

[116] Glage, p. 70.

Chapter 2.

Writing about the Poor:

Margaret Harkness/John Law and the Dramatization of Blackleg Work

Like Black, Margaret Harkness combined a writing career with an activist project, often using one to support the other; but both strands of Harkness's work were more explicitly and exclusively aimed at the representation of the conditions of people in working poverty. Engaging directly with the contemporary canon of narratives about poverty, she experimented with a variety of genres in order to portray the circumstances that produced blackleg work. She had spent time living in the East End of London to investigate poverty conditions, and her own experiences informed her social writing.[1] In an interview with the *Evening News and Post* in 1890, she stated that she began to write her first novel, *A City Girl* (1887), in reaction to what she perceived to be popular misrepresentations of working poverty in east London. With reference to one of Walter Besant's East End novels, probably *Children of Gibeon* (1886), Harkness stated that she was 'so disgusted with its untruthfulness that I conceived the idea of writing a story which should picture the lives of the East-enders in their true colours'.[2] Unlike Black, who aimed to win over her readers with her narratives of impoverished but admirable working women, Harkness suggested that, in picturing these 'true colours', she rather embraced than shied away from the likelihood of shocking her readers. This chapter explores Harkness's development of her own strategy for writing about blackleg workers and their experience.

[1] Around 1885–86, Harkness spent some time living in the workers' model dwellings Katharine Buildings in Whitechapel — the model for Charlotte's Buildings, the home of Nelly Ambrose, the protagonist of *A City Girl* — with her cousin, Beatrice Potter (later Webb), who worked as a rent collector there. Deborah Mutch, 'Introduction', in John Law, *A City Girl*, ed. by Deborah Mutch (Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2015), pp. 5–26 (p. 6).

[2] 'A Slum-Story Writer', *Evening News and Post*, 17 April 1890, p. 2. Like Besant's better-remembered novel *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* (1882), *Children of Gibeon* explores class-based notions of nurture versus nature through characters who have been brought up in different social and economic circumstances from those into which they were born. Harkness's text responded to the depictions of working poverty in the novel.

Like Black, Harkness supported herself through her writing, and the volume and subject matter of her publications reflect a publishing career driven by the parallel aims of selling enough of her work to live by, but also of putting forward her social observations and ideas to as extensive a readership as possible. While the two strands of Black's fiction writing were more distinct, with her fiction writing imagining possibilities for social change while her campaign writing put forward detailed activist strategies, Harkness's writing from the late 1880s onwards was permeated by the same activist concerns. Although she worked in different genres including factual reportage and fiction, her publications shared a consistent focus on the representation of conditions of urban poverty and precarious employment. My reading of Harkness's writing project takes in the fiction and non-fiction strands of the writing she produced in the late 1880s and early 1890s. During this period she was actively involved in the British labour movement and socialist politics, and her publications were geared towards raising awareness of poverty conditions in British cities, and particularly the slum neighbourhoods of London. Her political and social convictions both informed her writing. The first section of this chapter, 'The blackleg in the literary market', considers how Harkness united a blackleg writing career with a political project, seeking platforms for the political and economic questions she wished to address. It notes how she developed an authorial identity under the pseudonym 'John Law' as part of her self-representation as an author-activist, and explores both the intended readership and the subject matter of her writing project. The following two sections investigate how she developed her strategies for representing working poverty in her investigative journalism and her fiction. 'Investigation and presentation' focuses on her investigative writing on blackleg workers for two periodicals with different ideological aims, the socialist organ *Justice* and the Christian progressive *British Weekly*, both in the final years of the 1880s. I consider how these publications reflect the same core content and

assumptions, while their presentation is tailored to specific readerships. My exploration of her social investigation work shows how and why she used anecdotal evidence as a more effective representative strategy than data that often proved unreliable or uninformative. 'Discourses in dialogue' examines how her representative strategies played out in her fiction, which similarly used poignant images to portray the impact of poverty. My reading of her novels will focus on her four self-dubbed 'slum stories', *A City Girl*, *Out of Work* (1888), *Captain Lobe* (1889, reissued as *In Darkest London* in 1891), and *A Manchester Shirtmaker* (1890).[3] This chapter shows how anecdotes and images came to stand in for unavailable or unreliable data on working poverty in Harkness's work as it sought to visualize the circumstances of blackleg work for her readership.

The blackleg in the literary market

Like Black's, Harkness's use of representative strategies for the portrayal of poverty conditions was informed by her experience as a blackleg writer. It taught her to write for a variety of readerships and to push the boundaries of readers' expectations. Where Black's identity as an author-activist meant that her popular fiction and campaign writing existed in tandem, however, Harkness developed a new identity as author-activist for herself, using the pseudonym John Law. Black's writing was based on establishing connections between her own persona as author-activist, her consumer-reader, and the women she sought to represent; by using the alternative identity of John Law, Harkness introduced a sense of detachment between herself and her readers. This allowed her to write for a broader, less clearly designated readership, but also meant that she could not steer her readers towards particular forms of activism in the way Black did. The construction of John Law set Harkness's activist publications apart from the

[3] Harkness used the term 'slum stories' in 'A Slum-Story Writer'.

earlier work of the blackleg writer Margaret E. Harkness, but John Law's visualizations of economic conditions were rooted in Harkness's knowledge of blackleg work.

Harkness described her experience of making a living through literary work in a letter to her cousin Beatrice Potter (later Webb) early in 1884. She had given up her training as a nurse and dispenser in order to dedicate herself to the pursuit of a career as a writer.[4] Having 'tried literature now for nearly three years', however, she found herself subject to blackleg conditions of underpayment and a high pressure to produce. Although her output had been extensive, she stated that her 'income last year was 150£. I made it by working almost night and day.' She had tried diverse avenues of literary production, as she enumerated:

> I have written in many magazines and papers […]. Also two books of which I was forced to sell the copyright to an inferior publisher; and am preparing a book for Macmillan. I have also written an MS. which Bentley refused because it was directed against Capital Punishment, and which has been read by a good novelist and pronounced full of promise.[5]

Her words indicate that it was not simply her work itself that was undervalued in the literary market, but also the social message she attempted to embed in it: she felt that her manuscript was rejected not because it lacked literary qualities, but because it took a stand against the death penalty. Her letter went on to show that she considered literary talent to include the ability to use literature for a social purpose. She wrote:

> If I have a real talent for literature I will work on without fainting, but if I have no real talent I will give literature up. I don't care to fill the world with unnecessary books, or to take work which others can do as well, and want more. I will return to nursing, work which is real and earnest, and which I know I can do.[6]

[4] Deborah Mutch and Terry Elkiss, 'Biography of Margaret Harkness', in Law, *A City Girl*, ed. by Mutch, pp. 27–30 (p. 27).
[5] London, London Library of Political and Economic Science (LSE), Beatrice Potter correspondence, Passfield/2/1/2/2, Margaret Harkness to Beatrice Potter, 29 February 1884.
[6] LSE Passfield/2/1/2/2, 29 February 1884.

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Figure 3: Title page of *In Darkest London* (London: Reeves, 1893), showing advertisements on the facing page for *Out of Work* and *A City Girl*. British Library, London.

Although she was aware that she was a blackleg worker in literature, Harkness appears to have resisted the notion of merely writing for the market, producing 'unnecessary books'. Her description of nursing, a career path that she did not find fulfilling, as 'work which is real and earnest' suggests that she hoped to produce literary work that had a similarly socially useful function. With this aim she brought together her political and activist work and her writing. Her published work shows a combination of blackleg levels of production with social aims; and, like Black, she made use of her publishing experience to find platforms for her activist writing. She appears deliberately to have developed her identity from the blackleg writer Margaret Harkness to the author-activist John Law.

Harkness's wide-ranging publications reflect her combination of blackleg productivity with an activist agenda.[7] The British periodicals in which she published during the 1880s and 1890s range from the established, such as the *Nineteenth Century*, to the religious, such as the Nonconformist *British Weekly*, and the political, including *Justice*, the organ of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), with which she was involved in the mid-1880s.[8] Her novels were printed by several renowned publishers, each with different commercial and ideological agendas. *A City Girl* appeared with Vizetelly, the pioneering English publishers of naturalist writers including Émile Zola. Her second novel, *Out of Work*, was published by Swan Sonnenschein, the publishers of important figures in the British and international socialist movements including Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, H. H. Champion, and others. Her third novel, *Captain Lobe*, was first serialized in the *British Weekly* in 1888 and published in book form in 1889 by Hodder and Stoughton, the periodical's publishers. It was reissued as *In Darkest*

[7] The most complete bibliography of Harkness's work currently in print appears in Beate Kaspar, *Margaret Harkness,* A City Girl*: Eine literaturwissenschaftliche Untersuchung zum naturalistichen Roman des Spätviktorianismus* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1984), pp. 98–100. Since the appearance of Kaspar's text, however, new research has brought further publications to light, revealing her sustained reliance on income from publications, for instance during her sojourn in Australia around the turn of the twentieth century.

[8] Mutch and Elkiss, in Law, *A City Girl*, ed. by Mutch, p. 28.

London in 1891 and included in the series of progressive novels dubbed the 'Bellamy Library' by William Reeves, the radical publisher of political figures such as Henry Mayers Hyndman of the SDF and Sidney Webb of the Fabian Society. The new edition included an introduction by William Booth. Reeves also advertised new editions of *A City Girl* and *Out of Work* (see fig. 3). Harkness's frequent publications through a range of platforms gave her and her work a high level of public exposure. Werner G. Urlaub states that her 'novels were almost exclusively positively reviewed, often placed alongside great contemporary novels, and singled out from the majority of novels addressing comparable themes'.[9] Contemporary newspapers both in Britain and abroad published feature articles about her work and its influence, and her novels were even credited with considerable social impact overseas. One Australian periodical suggested that her descriptions of unemployment and casualized dock labour in *Out of Work* had helped to rally support in Australia for the Dockworkers' Strike and prompt a vital Australian donation to the strike fund.[10] This suggests that her representations of poverty and blackleg work reached broad, even international readerships and were deemed important by a variety of platforms whose business models rested on assumptions of social concern in their readers. Harkness's blackleg strategy of wide and frequent publication worked to raise her professional profile and broaden awareness of the conditions she addressed.

Harkness's first publications appeared in established periodicals and reflected the blackleg writer's priorities of producing work to market demand to ensure an income. Kaspar suggests that these first articles are predominantly useful to critics as they reflect Harkness's ability to master new information and present it in a 'clear and business-like' way to a 'middle-class' or 'bourgeois' [*bürgerliches*] readership, an

[9] Werner G. Urlaub, *Der spätviktorianische Sozialroman von 1880 bis 1890* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1977), p. 239. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.
[10] '"John Law" and the Labouring Classes', *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 6 May 1890, p. 6 <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/18996383> [accessed 24 December 2014]. I am grateful to Terry Elkiss for bringing this article to my attention.

apprenticeship, as it were, for her later work which employed the same skills of reportage for her own ends in presenting the conditions of the urban working poor.[11] Among her first publications were two articles for the *Nineteenth Century* entitled 'Women as Civil Servants' (1881) and 'Railway Labour' (1882), both of which relayed fieldwork research exploring the machinations of the labour market and the employment opportunities and working conditions of different social groups.[12] Her later work continued to reflect the blackleg writer's sound awareness of readership, as she made use of a variety of genres and writing traditions depending on her publishing platform. By the end of the 1880s, she was producing explicitly political compositions for the socialist periodical *To-Day* and investigative work with a sympathetically moral undertone for the *British Weekly*.[13] Her serial story 'Roses and Crucifix' (1891–92) for the feminist periodical the *Woman's Herald* addressed the links between economic and sexual exploitation of working women. Her ability to adopt and emulate different forms of writing is most evident in 'The Gospel of Getting On', a short story published in *To-Day* in 1888. The story carried the subtitle 'To Olive Schreiner' and offered a plea against capitalism and for the principles of socialism, deliberately rendered in the style of the evocative allegorical tales of her then close acquaintance Schreiner.[14] In contrast, she also showed herself willing and able to work within a tradition that retained Dickensian elements, as she produced short emotive stories about small children suffering under poverty for Christmas numbers of periodicals including the *British Weekly* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* (*PMG*).[15] Like Black, she appears to have exploited the opportunities that working to genre offered for suggesting new ideas to readers. For

[11] Kaspar, p. 13.
[12] Margaret E. Harkness, 'Women as Civil Servants', *Nineteenth Century*, September 1881, pp. 369–81, and 'Railway Labour', *Nineteenth Century*, November 1882, pp. 721–32.
[13] For an insight into Harkness's regular contributions to socialist periodicals, both under her own name and as John Law, see Deborah Mutch, *English Socialist Periodicals, 1880–1900: A Reference Source* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), and Kaspar, pp. 99–100.
[14] John Law, '"The Gospel of Getting On. (To Olive Schreiner.)" (1888)', in *British Socialist Fiction, 1884–1914*, ed. by Deborah Mutch, 5 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), I: *1884–1891*, 305–07.
[15] See John Law, 'A Pantomime Child', *British Weekly*, 17 December 1889, p. 138, and 'Little Tim's Christmas', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 24 December 1890, pp. 1–2.

instance, she championed the work of the Salvation Army in socialist publications such as *Justice*.[16] Comparably, she advocated the claims of the labour movement in the self-styled 'Journal of Social and Christian Progress' *British Weekly* when she reported on the Dockworkers' Strike in its pages.[17] Like Black's, Harkness's writing reflects the development of her opinions and her discovery of the scope for sharing these ideas with readers within blackleg writing.

In Harkness's case, her evolving ideas were explicitly linked to the development of her identity as author-activist. Her early publications all appeared under the name 'Margaret E. [Elise] Harkness' or 'M. E. Harkness'. *A City Girl* was her first publication under the pseudonym 'John Law', and she would continue to use this moniker until the end of her life, including for her final novel, *A Curate's Promise* (1921). In part, her decision to use a pseudonym appears to have been motivated by personal reasons linked to the conflict between her background and her politics. An 1890 feature article entitled 'Miss M. E. Harkness ("John Law")' published in the weekly ladies' magazine the *Queen* mentioned that she used 'a *nom de guerre* to hide her identity, because her family were opposed to her opinions'.[18] As the article's title shows, however, her identity had become an open secret by 1890. Nor does she ever appear to have aimed to keep her political participation completely hidden: her regular contributions to socialist publications *Justice* and the *Labour Elector* in the late 1880s were signed 'Margaret E. Harkness'. In one letter to the editor of *Justice*, she signed herself 'Yours fraternally': her participation in the SDF was therefore publicly evident.[19] Rather than a disguise for Harkness's political activities, the name John Law came to function as an independent persona. Harkness used it not only as an authorial

[16] See, for instance, Margaret E. Harkness, 'Salvationists and Socialists', *Justice*, 24 March 1888, p. 2, and 'To the Editor of *Justice'*, *Justice*, 14 April 1888, p. 6.
[17] As John Law, Harkness published two articles commenting on the Dockworkers' Strike in the *British Weekly*. See John Law, 'The Dockers' "Tanner"', *British Weekly*, 6 September 1889, p. 309, and 'The Strike Continues', *British Weekly*, 13 September 1889, pp. 319–20.
[18] 'Miss M. E. Harkness ("John Law")', *Queen*, 31 May 1890, p. 767, italics in original.
[19] Harkness, 'To the Editor of *Justice'*.

name, but also to sign articles that put across her own socio-political views, and often defended her own actions, especially during the Dockworkers' Strike.[20] Harkness's multifaceted and sometimes fluid gender and class identity as a writer gave her additional freedom in her participation in discourses about working poverty.

Deborah Epstein Nord reads Harkness's choice of pseudonym as a key to her own views of gender both in the literary market and in activist spheres. She proposes that the name John Law 'suggested a kind of masculine authority and forcefulness' that implied that Harkness 'did not wish to declare her female identity in her work or to write from an openly feminist or even avowedly female point of view'.[21] She goes on to state that

> Harkness partly disowns her identity even as she betrays it; and she repeatedly uses only male characters to represent the public world of working-class or middle-class politics. Socialism and labor organizing are imagined primarily as male spheres of action and thought, even though Harkness herself played a role in the Dock Strike and was active in the Social Democratic Federation.[22]

The idea of masculine names and authorial credibility that Nord puts forward was certainly addressed in contemporary commentaries, but the gendering of Harkness's authorial identity was, in fact, fluid. Mainstream and even socially conservative periodicals including the *Evening News* and the *Queen* generally accepted John Law as Harkness's alter ego. Both Harkness herself and commentators on her work comfortably combined the masculine name with a feminine pronoun. For instance, in a letter to the editor of the *PMG*, signed by 'One Who Knows "John Law"' but most probably written by Harkness herself, John Law was repeatedly referred to as 'she'.[23] Contemporaries did speculate on the reasons for Harkness's literary cross-dressing. As late as 1896, an

[20] See, for instance, John Law, 'To the Editor of the *Daily News*', *Daily News,* 23 August 1889, p. 6, and 'One Who Knows "John Law"', '"Salvation" and Socialism', *Pall Mall Gazette***,** 29 October 1890, p. 2.
[21] Deborah Epstein Nord, '"Neither Pairs nor Odd": Female Community in Late Nineteenth-Century London', *Signs*, 15.4 (1990), 733–54 (pp. 746–47) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3174640> [accessed 4 November 2013].
[22] Nord, p. 747.
[23] 'One Who Knows "John Law"'.

Australian periodical mentioned John Law in a short article on gender switching in the choice of literary pseudonyms; while it described women's use of male pseudonyms as their 'lik[ing] to strut about the literary world in trousers', it did admit, without further comment, that this desire was 'comprehensible'.[24] Others disagreed, arguing that no distinction was made between the voices of male and female writers. In 1890, the *Manchester Times* scoffed:

> Some years ago, when Miss Evans adopted the name of George Eliot, there was reason for the change, for women had better chance of securing a hearing while masquerading under men's names, but this reason holds good no longer, and 'Cyril Bennett' might just as well confess to being Miss Rose Ingleby, and 'John Law' to being Miss Margaret Harkness. […] We commend the courage of those women who dare to write under their own names from the very first, and do not puzzle their readers by putting their real names in brackets after success is secured.[25]

Although Harkness's male pseudonym may have given her more opportunity to assert herself in a literary market whose exploitative conditions she had experienced as a blackleg worker, her male alter ego was not an identity she hid behind. She used her pseudonym more, not less, as she built up her literary reputation.

While the pseudonym is very likely to have been intended, as Nord suggests, to imbue Harkness's statements with a sense of authority, this authority was not necessarily or exclusively gender-based. The surname Law was linked to Harkness's own family, but the name John Law also established a clear socio-economic connection in its reference to the eighteenth-century Scottish economist of the same name.[26] Harkness's intention of evoking this connection is made explicit in *Out of Work*, which is ironically dedicated to 'John Law of Lauriston'.[27] The use of the authorial name of an

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[24] 'No Petticoats', *National Advocate*, 31 December 1896, p. 2. I am grateful to Terry Elkiss for bringing this article to my attention.
[25] 'Afternoon Chat', *Manchester Times***,** Saturday 7 June 1890, p. 6.
[26] On the Harkness family's connection to the surname Law, see Allen Cooper, 'A Rebel in the Rectory', in *Dorset Year Book 2007* (n.p.: The Society of Dorset Men, 2007), pp. 9–11 (p. 11). On the economist John Law, see Richard Bonney, 'Law, John (*bap.* 1671, *d.* 1729)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online edn, October 2009 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16150> [accessed 24 April 2017].
[27] John Law, *Out of Work* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1888), unpaginated (p. v).

historical economist connected Harkness's work with economic discourse, suggesting that her representations of work and poverty acted as case studies to reveal the iniquities of an economic system. The identity of economic commentator was more readily available to John Law than to Margaret Harkness.

The sense of detachment fostered by this authorial identity raises the question of the readership to which Harkness/John Law intended to address her publications and their representations and indictments of the economic status-quo. In contrast to Black's clearly delineated appeal to middle-class, and predominantly female, consumer-readers, the wide scope of Harkness's publications creates doubt as to where she was directing her social criticism. The average readership of the various periodicals in which she published is relatively easy to identify, but her choice of platforms was so diverse that it is difficult to draw conclusions about a broader target audience based on class, gender, or other social or economic distinctions. The readership of her novels is still more elusive. While most of her publishers were associated with radical genres and ideas in various ways, her novels were reviewed in a range of mainstream periodicals. As such, it is difficult to determine who she felt could and should change the conditions she exposed. While Black addressed an audience of potential activists by identifying common ground between herself and her consumer-readers, the ambiguous social position taken by John Law as well as Harkness precluded this. Critics including Nord and Matthew Beaumont have pointed to Harkness's own isolated social position, which Seth Koven describes as 'precariously middle-class'.[28] Her developing sympathy for blackleg workers also contributed to render her 'relationship to her own class' 'marginal and strained'.[29] The classlessness of John Law is echoed in the novels.

[28] Nord, pp. 735–36, Matthew Beaumont, '"A Little Political World of My Own: The New Woman, the New Life, and *New Amazonia*', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 35 (2007), 215–32 (p. 221), and Seth Koven, 'The Social Question and the Jewish Question', in *Imagination and Commitment: Representations of the Social Question*, ed. by Ilja van den Broek, Christianne Smit, and Dirk Jan Wolffram (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), pp. 37–58 (p. 40).
[29] Nord, p. 745.

The undefined position of the narrative voice in Harkness's novels has prompted different understandings among critics as regards their intended readership. Gerd Bjørhovde notes that the apparent aim of Harkness's work was 'to raise the awareness of the working class, of its potential for power, for action, and to improve its self-image, its confidence in itself'. As such, she suggests the possibility that 'her books are addressed to some sort of "enlightened" working-class reader. But', she goes on to point out,

> there is also a sort of 'explanatory' discourse running through the novels, implying a reader that seems to be conceived of as some sort of enlightened, 'class-less' humanist, someone who — like the narrator! — sees things more clearly than the characters, whether working or upper-class. The narrator of the text is out to 'explain' the working class and the class society in general — its behaviour, its attitudes and emotions — to the reader.[30]

Bjørhovde, then, sees the persona of John Law as a '"class-less" humanist' whose narrative authority derives from their own detachment from the conditions described: a position closer to that of an economist than a novelist. As John Law was an invented identity, however, the notion of a comparably detached readership is less realistic; and it is unclear, furthermore, what would be the purpose of revealing economic iniquities to readers who did not feel moved by the novels' representations of poverty. While Bjørhovde remains undecided as to whether Harkness set out to represent the working class to itself or to the middle class whose experience was further removed from the subject matter of the novels, she is clear on two points: the novels aimed to represent workers' experience, and the authorial voice was geared towards this representation by its positioning of itself outside the realities of the novel. John Law observed and reflected the action without participating in it. This enhances the conception of the novels as visualizations of economic relations. Eileen Sypher, in contrast, sees a strong

[30] Gerd Bjørhovde, *Rebellious Structures: Women Writers and the Crisis of the Novel 1880–1900* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1987), pp. 82–83.

authorial presence in the novels, determined by the relationship she perceives between Harkness and a middle-class readership. She states:

> On the one hand, Harkness's novels desire to represent and applaud the underrepresented, a working class surrounded and sometimes moved by radical and proto-feminist ideas. On the other hand, intimidated by the middle-class textual reader they have constructed, her novels desire to contain this representation, to secure within the reader what is fundamentally a conservative, patronizing, paternalistic perspective on both the working class and women's independence.[31]

Sypher, too, sees the representation of the 'underrepresented' as crucial to Harkness's novels; but she feels that Harkness's representations did not sufficiently acknowledge workers' subjectivity and political awareness. Her analysis has much in common with that of Engels who, in 1888, recorded that he considered the working class as it appeared in *A City Girl* to be too passive, 'unable to help itself and not even making any attempt at striving to help itself. All attempts to drag it out of its torpid misery come from without, from above.'[32] While it is clear that the narrative voice did not belong to the communities it described, it also refused to align itself with a defined class of readers.

The presence of an explanatory discourse, however, may not necessarily point to straightforward class distinctions. Bjørhovde and Sypher, like Engels, consider the subject of Harkness's novels to be the working class. Harkness herself, however, pointed out in 1891 that 'my principal interest is with a class below the unskilled labourers': in other words, with workers whose circumstances were characterized by extreme poverty and highly precarious living and working conditions.[33] As my analysis of Harkness's novels will show, the majority of her protagonists are trapped in, and driven to desperation by, the poverty that forces them into blackleg work. Assuming

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[31] Eileen Sypher, *Wisps of Violence: Producing Public and Private Politics in the Turn-of-the-Century British Novel* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 109.
[32] Friedrich Engels, 'Letter to Margaret Harkness, Beginning of April 1888 (draft)', in *Marx & Engels on Literature and Art*, ed. by Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski (New York: International General, 1974), pp. 115–17 (pp. 115–16).
[33] John Law, 'A Year of My Life', *New Review*, October 1891, pp. 375–84 (p. 377).

that blackleg workers were the subjects of the novels alters the debate around representation and readership. By representing her characters as attracted by germs of socialist and feminist ideas but not allowing them to develop this thinking, Harkness highlighted the powerlessness that characterized the social and economic position of the workers she depicted. Harkness herself seems to have been instrumental in ensuring the rapid availability of cheaper editions of her work, advertising *A City Girl* and *A Manchester Shirtmaker* as the first in the 'shilling series' issued by the newly established Authors' Co-operative Publishing Company in 1890 (see figs 4 and 5).[34] This desire to make her work widely and cheaply available seems to suggest the possibility of a wider audience, spread across a broader range of social and economic classes and political premises. Readers from both the middle and working classes could find their understanding of economic exploitation enhanced by studying the conditions of blackleg work; and John Law's detachment allowed the novels to appeal across classes.

This notion that Harkness sought to address a broad readership is supported by Deborah Mutch's analysis of the writing of British socialists during this period as characterized by a general sense of 'literary literacy' which, in its 'quotations, references and allusions' made 'no distinction between "high" and "low" culture'.[35] Mutch explains that this should be read as 'a wide embrace of cultural production without socially imposed distinctions of hierarchy'.[36] Like many other socialist writers whose 'stories incorporate a journalistic element', Harkness mixed her fiction with a journalistic style and vice versa, and was prepared to evoke literary references and parallels to aid her readers' understanding.[37] Ostensibly, she rejected contemporary literary conventions, informing the *Evening News*: 'They tell me I lose sight of art in my

[34] 'New Books Issued by The Authors' Co-operative Publishing Company, Limited', *Bookseller*, 14 December 1889, p. 1388.
[35] Mutch, 'General Introduction', in *British Socialist Fiction*, I, pp. vii–xxvii (p. vii).
[36] Mutch, 'General Introduction', in *British Socialist Fiction*, I, p. viii.
[37] Mutch, 'Introduction', in *British Socialist Fiction*, II: *1892–1900*, vii–xiv (p. viii).

zeal to enforce a purpose. But I care nothing for art; my purpose is all.'[38] This outwardly iconoclastic position reflects her search for new modes of representation.

Harkness's preference in literary strategies appears to have gone out to visualization rather than narration. Writing to Potter, Harkness described Dante as 'perfect', and *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe as her 'ideal form of novel-writing', and contrasted these with George Eliot, whose work she called 'all one long study, an exercise'. Instead, she stated: 'I have always said a plot was a bourgeois thing, that a novel should be like a sonata, full of different movements.'[39] Across her oeuvre, Harkness adhered to this resistance to plot, rather offering her readers vignettes of urban working poverty in her journalism as well as in her novels and short stories. Indeed her fiction sometimes echoed almost verbatim images and phrases from her social investigation serials. Her perception of narrative plots as 'bourgeois' suggests that she felt more traditional narrative structures did not apply to the experiences she sought to represent; and this appears to have motivated her experiments with alternative representative strategies. Her journalism and her fiction explored different possibilities for visualizing economic conditions.

Investigation and presentation: Harkness's social investigation

With their more specific readerships, Harkness's periodical publications illustrate her attempts to raise awareness of the conditions of blackleg workers among different activist communities. Whereas Black aimed her activist writings at a designated social group and set out to empower middle-class women to participate in socially acceptable forms of political activism, Harkness tried to unite strands of activism that were often considered mutually exclusive, and even called for collaboration between organizations

[38] 'A Slum-Story Writer'.
[39] LSE Passfield/2/1/2/2, Margaret Harkness to Beatrice Potter, undated [placed in the collection after 1887].

with sometimes widely different ideological goals. Her representative strategies sought to bridge ideological divides by showing both the personal impact of extreme poverty and the economic context that produced it. By showing blackleg work as a phenomenon that was damaging to individuals but also symptomatic of political and economic problems, Harkness's investigations attempted to make poverty conditions the concern of groups with a variety of social and political agendas.

The body of Harkness's periodical contributions combines to give an insight into her broader social project. In October 1890, about a year after the Dockworkers' Strike, she published an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* that outlined both her objections to contemporary socialist political practice and her hopes for the potential of inter-organizational cooperation to attain a unified movement towards social progress. She explained that, in early 1889,

> [m]y Socialistic dream was vanishing; for I had discovered to my bitter disappointment that the Socialist leaders were the strongest Individualists of my acquaintance, and that, although six of them could do the necessary work if united, no six could work together for six months without a quarrel. They talked Socialism, but practised Individualism; and all the time the slummers were starving.[40]

Her phrase 'necessary work' echoes her 1884 letter to Potter on her hopes for the potential of 'special' and necessary work in literature; and her statement shows that, in her opinion, what was most immediately 'necessary' was to combat the extremes of poverty she encountered in slum neighbourhoods. The article went on to praise the united efforts of various socialist and labour activists, including Burns, Champion, and Mann, to support the striking dockworkers, but she also described with great admiration the practical work of the Salvation Army as it 'distributed food tickets to the hungry people'.[41] This commendation of political and social activism indicates that Harkness was willing to support the work of any organization that set out to improve poverty

[40] John Law, '"Salvation" v. Socialism: In Praise of General Booth', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 21 October 1890, pp. 1–2 (p. 1).
[41] Law, '"Salvation" v. Socialism', p. 1.

conditions. She ascribed the success of the strike to both, parallel, forms of activism: the political work of the strike leaders was supported by the material aid provided by the Salvation Army. In Harkness's analysis, these different approaches formed two aspects of 'necessary work' that must be combined to achieve social progress.

Harkness felt it to be particularly important to draw attention to the conditions of blackleg workers. These workers fell through the cracks of the optimistic narrative of New Unionism that saw trade unions incorporating both skilled and unskilled workers, a belief that gained traction following the Dockworkers' Strike. In the years after the successful strikes of casualized workers such as the matchwomen and the dockworkers it transpired that, in spite of these individual victories, the living and working conditions of the majority of workers in poverty had not improved materially. In '"Salvation" v. Socialism', Harkness wrote: 'the great strike has come and gone, and we are very little nearer the social millennium. Some hundreds of thousands of unskilled workers have risen in the social scale, but poverty is still in the land.'[42] Three years later, she noted, in an article about charitable efforts to feed the children of workers in long-term unemployment: '"We want no charity," say the Trades Unionists. That is true enough; but they know there is a stratum of society Trades Unionism does not touch'.[43] By contrast, philanthropic interference did aim to improve these material conditions in the provision of food, fuel, clothing, and other essentials to low-paid workers in precarious employment, but these were short-term solutions that were not intended to change the socio-economic position of the people concerned. In her social investigation publications in periodicals aimed at both a socialist and a Christian religious activist readership, Harkness tried to impress on her readers the need for both forms of aid, by trying to strike a balance between the effective aspects of both kinds of activism.

[42] Law, '"Salvation" v. Socialism', p. 1.
[43] John Law, 'The Children of the Unemployed', *New Review*, February 1893, pp. 228–36 (p. 231).

As she set out to present conditions that she found underrepresented in both literary and political discourse, Harkness's social investigation, as well as her fiction, reflects her private search both for new information and for a new representative style in which to describe it. Her journalistic career in the early 1880s had taught her skills of reportage, collecting new information and presenting it for various readerships. She employed these skills in her social investigation as well, as she gathered new data on the living and working conditions of blackleg workers to present them to different readerships belonging to different activist communities. According to her interview with the *Evening News*, Harkness began to write social investigation for the periodical market as a result of the publication of *Out of Work*. She stated that 'the editor of the *British Weekly* wrote and asked me if I would write a series of papers they were contemplating on young men. He, of course, thought "John Law" was a man.' Once this misunderstanding was cleared up, however, she added: 'I undertook to write the papers on young women.'[44] The timeline here is a source of some confusion. The papers referred to were published initially in the *British Weekly*, as 'Tempted London: Young Men' and 'Tempted London: Young Women'. Kaspar lists *Tempted London: Young Men* (1888), the publication in book form of the first series of articles, as one of Harkness's publications; the 'Young Men' series, however, had begun to appear in October 1887, while *Out of Work* was not published until the beginning of 1888.[45] It is not clear either whether Harkness proposed to write an already planned follow-up series on young women, or whether she suggested converting a second proposed series on young men into one about young women. It is also possible that the confusion is due to a simple reporting error. In any case it is clear that the editor of the *British Weekly* recognized Harkness's expertise in reflecting the experience of young workers in

[44] 'A Slum-Story Writer'.
[45] Kaspar, p. 98.

chronic poverty, as well as her ability to present this social reality for different readerships.

It is certain that Harkness was closely involved with the 'Young Women' series, which was published in book form by Hodder and Stoughton as *Toilers in London; or, Inquiries Concerning Female Labour in the Metropolis* in 1889. The title page named the authors of the text as 'the "British Weekly" Commissioners' and Harkness as the editor, describing her as 'the Author of "Out of Work" etc.'.[46] The difference between *Toilers* and *Tempted London* was marked, in a way that I contend shows Harkness's personal priorities as the series editor. *Tempted London* had a strong moralizing tone on a Christian religious basis, focusing, as the title suggests, on the temptations, such as pubs and theatres, that beset young men alone in London and jeopardized their financial and moral position. The text claimed that 'it may be said that millions have had their lives darkened by the defeat and ruin of some one they have loved in that centre of temptation', London.[47] The text implied that its public exposure of a situation that claimed so many victims might cause it to be recognized and addressed as a social problem. Although the young men described were paid low wages, their poverty was primarily represented as a concern in the text because they were encouraged to spend what little money they had on cheap entertainment that was morally dubious. *Toilers*, by contrast, was concerned entirely with the working and living conditions of young women in low-paid work, from street-selling and factory work to sweated home work and bar work. So far from wishing to keep these young women from the dangers of city life, the text addressed the ways in which they sought opportunities for independence and solidarity. The text frequently referred to Black and the work of the 'Women's Trade Union and Provident League' as offering crucial support to these women workers

[46] '"British Weekly" Commissioners', *Toilers in London, or, Inquiries Concerning Female Labour in the Metropolis*, ed. by Margaret Harkness (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1889), unpaginated (p. iii).
[47] *Tempted London: Young Men* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1888), p. 1.

in their attempts to organize, and also praised Black's social investigation and socio-economic analysis with reference to her 1888 *Woman's World* article 'Something about Needlewomen'.[48] This suggests that Harkness recognized these young low-paid workers' socio-economic status as a problem that had both a personal and a social impact, and that she was in a position to ask her readers to support these workers in attempts to organize. Her activist approach in *Toilers* echoed Black's efforts to draw middle-class women into women's trade unionism.

Toilers also employed a strategy of assuming concern in the readers that had elements in common with Black's implication that her readers only needed to be enlightened in order to take action against exploitation. It emphasized the veracity of its descriptions of poverty by forestalling an incredulous reaction on the part of the reader. The text stated:

> People often say, 'If things were really as bad as this we should hear more about it.' Only those who go amongst the London poor can interpret their silence. They are still because they are starving. […] Hunger takes all the spirit out of the unemployed, and so the public are inclined to think 'Outcast London' a myth, and 'Bitter cries' sensational stories.[49]

This passage not only laid a claim to the reliability of the data collected by the investigators, but also commented on the difficulties of representing this information. A few pages later, the text commented: 'Directly a thing is told that pricks the conscience of the reader, we hear, "You are sensational," and when against the will tears come to the eyes of readers, they tell us, "It is not a true story."'[50] This suggests that representative strategies that were successful in evoking an emotional response in the reader could still be dismissed as stories that were sensationalized and exaggerated with the aim of producing precisely such an emotional reaction. By reflecting this disbelief back to the reader, however, the text pre-empted it; it implied that dismissive responses

[48] '"British Weekly" Commissioners', p. 238.
[49] '"British Weekly" Commissioners', pp. 48–49.
[50] '"British Weekly" Commissioners', p. 53.

like these applied to other readers. Like Black's campaign writing, *Toilers* offered readers a representation of themselves that accommodated the idea that they only required information in order to make up their minds about the conditions presented and to undertake action to improve them.

From 1888 onwards, the *British Weekly* recognized and presented Harkness as an authority on urban poverty. She was commissioned to write the serial that would become *Captain Lobe*, which ran alongside the 'Young Women' series in 1888; she also reported on the Dockworkers' Strike in the magazine, and published the Christmas story 'A Pantomime Child' in its pages at the end of 1889. An investigatory series entitled 'Life in Lancashire', furthermore, commenced on 10 May 1889, and contains phrases that correspond so closely to passages in *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, published early in the following year, that Harkness was almost certainly the author at least of the instalments on labour and living conditions in Manchester, although no indication of her involvement is given in the periodical. The entry in the issue of 7 June, for instance, describes the Saturday market of Shudehill in Manchester in precisely the terms used to introduce the city in the first chapter of *A Manchester Shirtmaker*. Both texts mention the presence at the market of young women 'out for "picking-up" purposes', and describe the cries of vendors, specifically '[c]ome buy, buy, buy, my Manchester special'.[51] On the previous page of the same issue of the periodical appears a report of the imprisonment of Henry Vizetelly, Harkness's first publisher, under the Obscene Publications Act for issuing English-language translations of the novels of Émile Zola. The article announced that '[a]t last an efficient check has been put on the publication and distribution of obscene literature'.[52] This suggests that Harkness's previous association with Vizetelly had not damaged her reputation or her literary value as far as

[51] 'Life in Lancashire. V. Manchester on a Saturday Night', *British Weekly*, 7 June 1889, p. 98. The two quotations are echoed verbatim in John Law, *A Manchester Shirtmaker* (London: Authors' Co-operative Publishing Company, 1890), pp. 5 and 4 resp.
[52] 'Notes of the Week: Vizetelly's Imprisonment', *British Weekly*, 7 June 1889, p. 97.

Hodder and Stoughton and the *British Weekly* were concerned, and that the editor's interest in her work sprang from a recognition of her expertise on the subject of the conditions of the urban working poor and her ability to relay this knowledge to different readerships.

At the same time as she was commissioned to contribute to the *British Weekly*, Harkness also found a readership for her social investigations in *Justice: The Organ of the Social Democracy*, a very different platform. The two social investigation articles she published in *Justice* in 1888 — 'Girl Labour in the City', published on 3 March, and 'Home Industries', published on 28 August — are in the same vein as *Toilers*, giving details of young women's working conditions; but there is a difference in tone, with the articles in *Justice* focusing more on placing the question of blackleg work and underpayment in a political and economic context. 'Girl Labour in the City' is of particular relevance here, as it explained the processes by which Harkness endeavoured to collect information on women's work and the difficulties she encountered. There is a clearer sense of social criticism in 'Girl Labour' than is evident in *Toilers*, as she highlighted the problems inherent in a situation that required her, an independent researcher, to discover data that should be officially recorded and made publicly available. This indicates her conviction that the conditions of low-paid women workers should be a public concern, but were not; her special work, then, was to make them one. She opened 'Girl Labour' by informing her readers:

> There are at the present time absolutely no figures to go upon if one wishes to learn something about the hours and wages of girls who follow certain occupations in the City. The factory inspectors (admirable men, but very much overworked) come, with the most naïve delight, to visit any person who has information to give about the people over whose interests they are supposed to watch with fatherly interest. Clergymen shake their heads, or refer one to homes and charities. One has to find out the truth for oneself. Both employers and employees must be visited. Even then one must wait days and weeks to inspire them with

> confidence, for thus alone can one obtain a thorough knowledge of things as they really are, and arrive at facts unbiased by prejudice.[53]

Harkness's assessment here has much in common with Black's comments on the impossibility of determining the wages of home workers: the irregular nature of these young urban workers' occupations meant that information was difficult to come by. In the absence of reliable figures, Harkness provided evocative examples, reliant on the use of images and anecdotes to represent a broader problem. She presented her readers with 'two typical cases':

> A girl living just over Blackfriars Bridge, in one small room, for which she pays 5s., earns 10s. a week in a printer's business. She works from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., then returns home to do all the washing, cleaning, cooking, &c., that is necessary in a one-room establishment. She has an invalid mother dependent on her efforts […]. She was sixteen last Christmas. Another girl, who lives in two cellars near Lisson Grove, with father, mother, and six brothers and sisters, earns 3s. 6d. a week in a well known [*sic*] factory. She is seventeen years old, but does not look more than ten or eleven. Every morning she walks a mile to her work, arriving at eight o'clock; every evening she walks a mile back, reaching home about seven o'clock. If she arrives at the factory five minutes late she is fined 7d. If she stays away a whole day she is 'drilled,' that is, kept without work a whole week. Her father has been out of employment for six months, so her weekly 3s. 6d. goes into the family purse. Her food consists of three slices of bread and butter, which she takes to the factory for dinner; one slice of bread and butter and some weak tea for supper and breakfast.

Harkness went on to assure her readers: 'These cases are not picked. They are to be found scattered all over London.'[54] The details of these examples show the difficulties of assessing the quality of life available on these workers' wages: the young woman of the first example earned significantly more than the second, but half of her pay went on rent and the rest was needed to support a dependent relative; the lower earnings of the other added to 'the family purse', but this unspecified total budget was required to support a large family. Based on irregular data like this, evocative detail such as the unvaried and insufficient diet of bread and butter of the second young worker, or the

[53] Margaret E. Harkness, 'Girl Labour in the City', *Justice*, 3 March 1888, pp. 4–5 (p. 4).
[54] Harkness, 'Girl Labour', pp. 4–5.

triple shift of paid, household, and care work of the first, gave a more relatable sense of their poverty. Details of their domestic circumstances illustrated the pressures on these young women that created their blackleg conditions: their responsibilities prevented them from risking their current income to search for better employment.

There is a strong indictment in 'Girl Labour' of the organizations whose responsibility it was to safeguard the working conditions of these young women. It is significant that Harkness chose a socialist periodical as her platform for this exposé. The absence of regulation in these young women's work forced them into blackleg conditions, with a lack of control over their hours and wages. Drawing the attention of socialist activists to these conditions demanded a recognition in socialist political practice of the involuntary nature of blackleg work, and required it to incorporate blackleg conditions and experience into its activist strategies. Laying claim to public concern on these disempowered workers' behalf, Harkness stated:

> I deliberately say of all the victims of our present competitive system I pity these girls the most. They are so fragile. Honest work is made for them almost impossible, and if they slip, no one gives them a second chance, they are kicked and spat upon by the public. I know that the girl-labour question is but a portion of the larger labour question, that nothing can be done for them at present; but I wish that they were not the victims of the laissez-faire policy in two ways instead of one …[55]

Harkness's arguments on the powerlessness and super-exploitation of these workers and the conditions that forced them into blackleg work relied on anecdotal evidence rather than numerical data, which was unavailable in a system that did not recognize the value of their work. Giving examples of real workers affected by these conditions also increased the sense of the immediacy and the widespread nature of the problem.

This strategy of visualization allowed Harkness to highlight both the desperation that a blackleg worker's situation could entail, and the humanity of the workers themselves. She foregrounded the conditions that produced the Dockworkers' Strike,

[55] Harkness, 'Girl Labour', p. 5.

for instance, by describing the levels of poverty that casual workers suffered under. She wrote in the *British Weekly* that, before the strike, 'the men fought like wild beasts for [employment] tickets, […] hurled brick-bats and stones at the contractors' heads, [and] pressed so hard on the iron barrier that it had to be taken away, because it cut into their flesh'.[56] She was careful, however, to balance these images with others that showed the humanity of these desperate workers, to avoid their being identified with social upheaval. Like Black, who framed her sympathy for young female factory workers in terms that played down the social disruption associated with their access to financial and sexual independence, Harkness frequently combined her appeals for better conditions for blackleg workers with attempts to reduce their potential social threat. In contrast with its moralistic predecessor, *Tempted London*, however, the human details included in the representation of the young female workers' experience in *Toilers* worked to enhance their subjectivity. Highlighting their humanity made it more difficult to dismiss their situation. The chapter entitled 'Factory-Girls' in *Toilers* shows parallels with Black's descriptions of factory workers with its frequent references to young female workers' personal generosity and prototypical solidarity as they engaged in mutual material aid, lending money and sharing food, clothing, and accommodation. These admirable qualities were counterbalanced against the ways in which these young workers undermined social hierarchies. The chapter noted:

> the girl who turns her back on parents and family, who cheeks her employers, and laughs at passers-by in the street, is like wax when a fellow-worker falls ill or a collection has to be made for a sick companion. She lends her clothes and her boots if a friend can thus get a chance of 'bettering herself.' She shares her last crust with a girl out of work, and 'cries her eyes out' over the grave of a fellow-worker.[57]

Although they were blackleg workers, these young women stood in solidarity with one another, and this is presented as a sign of their social and personal responsibility and

[56] Law, 'The Dockers' "Tanner"'.
[57] '"British Weekly" Commissioners', pp. 175–76.

sympathy. Their readiness to support their friends and fellow workers showed that they resisted their lot and did their best to help others escape it; their grief at the deaths of others reflected that these workers shared in their suffering as well as in their strokes of luck.

A similar point was made about impoverished workers' ability to care about more abstract concepts such as honesty and beauty. This worked to counteract notions that life in slum neighbourhoods had a universally brutalizing effect, as suggested by the representation of aggressive and abusive characters like Billy Chope in 'Lizerunt', one of Arthur Morrison's *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894), or Bob Hewett in George Gissing's *The Nether World* (1889). Again, revealing that people in extreme poverty retained human sensibility served to emphasize the injustice and iniquity of their circumstances. The text included direct attempts to engage with popular discourse about the poorer districts of the city; for instance, with reference to the notorious Old Nichol on which Morrison based *A Child of the Jago* (1896), the text pointed out that '[t]he neighbourhood has a bad name, and is said to be the resort of thieves, but our Commissioners report that the people seem to be engaged in honest industries'.[58] The honest intent of the people described is illustrated by the statement that the commissioners 'have not once been asked for money, only for work': this indicated that these workers wished to support themselves and their own dependants, but were prevented from doing so by their economic situation.[59] The resistance to the brutalizing influences of slum conditions was visualized for the reader through evocative images that showed these impoverished workers' ability to think beyond the strain of irregular work and chronic poverty. For instance, in the first chapter of *Toilers*, on the subject of young women engaged in the street-selling of flowers, the following diversion from the immediate subject appears:

[58] '"British Weekly" Commissioners', p. 38.
[59] '"British Weekly" Commissioners', p. 47.

> It is wonderful to witness the love which the poorest and lowest people in London have for flowers. They watch over their sickly geraniums and blighted dwarf rose-trees with more devotion than a gardener bestows on hot-house plants, which he expects to see later on carrying off prizes at exhibitions. In the East End markets, flowers […] are sold to people who never eat meat during the week, who can scarcely afford to buy meat on Sunday. This love of flowers is one of the most hopeful symptoms in the condition of the *very poor* in London.[60]

What was meant by 'hopeful' in this context is not explained, but the fact that these workers valued their flowers above considerations like food certainly suggested an ability to transcend aspects of life in slum neighbourhoods such as dirt and squalor. As this was in no way linked to economic self-improvement, it evoked a sense of common humanity between the readers and the subjects of the text, and highlighted the fact that people who lived in poverty were by no means necessarily resigned to their surroundings. Comparably, in *A City Girl*, the protagonist Nelly Ambrose is described as caring for 'her bit of garden — a green box, in which she had planted some musk and other cheap plants between two rows of oyster shells', an image that suggests her capacity for personal affection, which she redirects to her garden in a household dominated by uncaring and abusive relatives.[61] For the purposes of the two texts, these images of attempts to introduce beauty into slum neighbourhoods also served to set off the environment: pointing to a common humanity between readers and the inhabitants of slum neighbourhoods allowed the texts to show that slum conditions were suitable for no class of society.

Like the portraits of working women in Black's campaign fiction, these images of people forced by poverty into blackleg work functioned to expose the injustice of their conditions in Harkness's investigative journalism. Visualizing the effects of poverty made the conditions of blackleg workers more real and relatable than other kinds of data that were irregular and unreliable; while emphasizing the humanity of

[60] '"British Weekly" Commissioners', p. 3, emphasis in original.
[61] John Law, *A City Girl* (London: Authors' Co-operative Publishing Company, 1890 [first published 1887]), p. 20.

these workers, the involuntary nature of their blackleg identity, and their discomfort in slum accommodation made clear to potential activists across the political spectrum that these workers suffered under a social problem that had to be addressed.

Discourses in dialogue: Harkness's fiction

If Harkness's journalism aimed to illustrate for her readers the conditions of blackleg work and the circumstances that made workers into blacklegs, her fiction allowed her to explore blackleg experience in a more personalized way. Her rejection of plot became increasingly evident as her narratives strung together poignant images reflecting the impact of poverty on characters who took on a similar role to the same kind of randomly selected evidence she posited in articles like 'Girl Labour'. The titles of her novels suggested that her protagonists were representative of blackleg experience: they were 'a city girl', 'out of work', and 'a Manchester shirtmaker'. In this way her novels gave the impression that they presented typical examples, selected as economic case studies by the detached narrator John Law. By laying a claim to representing the reality of blackleg experience, Harkness explicitly placed the novels she produced between 1887 and 1890 in dialogue with other contemporary styles of writing about poverty. Combining journalism and social investigation with new genres of fiction writing such as naturalism, she experimented with different ways of visualizing a range of aspects of the experience of exploitation and extreme poverty, each foregrounding different priorities in settings including domesticity in *A City Girl*, political discourse in *Out of Work*, and social activism in *Captain Lobe*. *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, finally, appears to reject all of these discourses in order to expose suffering that was presented as inescapable under the economic status-quo. This section examines how Harkness's fiction writing engaged with a variety of contemporary discourses about working poverty. It gives detailed consideration to the four novels she published between 1887

and 1890 as reflections of how the changes in her political and social priorities affected her representative strategies.

Harkness's novels set out to represent typical examples of blackleg experience, but she also suggested that her very determination to represent these characters was novel and radical: the situations described in her novels were presented as ubiquitous but invisible. The rapid production and publication of her novels ensured that they were closely connected to contemporary conditions and events. Nord notes that many of the figures who populate Harkness's novels such as 'her middle-class slum-workers, Salvation Army officers, and Fabians reflect a contemporary reality that had, as yet, no literary existence'.[62] Details like these show how Harkness's fiction worked in tandem with her investigative journalism, choosing anecdotes and details to exemplify current realities. This determination to visualize the contemporary affected her literary strategies: while Nord suggests that 'Harkness's working-class heroines seem familiar literary types', the novelty of their stories derived from Harkness's exploration of the impact of their blackleg identity and the sexual and economic exploitation to which they are subject.[63]

Harkness's fiction used current events and campaigns to suggest, by means of evocative scenes and images, how these circumstances affected blackleg workers. For instance, 'A Pantomime Child', her 1889 Christmas story for the *British Weekly* about an abused girl working as a child actor in Christmas pantomime productions, can be read as a response to a campaign by the National Vigilance Association (NVA) in the late 1880s to raise awareness of the conditions under which children worked in theatres.[64] The story shows how the child protagonist, Dolly, has no option but to work

[62] Nord, p. 746.
[63] Nord, p. 746.
[64] See Manchester, Manchester Central Library, Women's Suffrage Collection, M50/5/2/1, Mrs Henry [Millicent Garrett] Fawcett, *Theatre and Pantomime Children* (London: National Vigilance Association, n.d.), and M50/5/2/2, Garrett Fawcett, *The Employment of Children in Theatres* (London: National Vigilance Association, n.d.). The items are dated as 'post-1885' and '*c*. 1888' resp. in the archives.

in theatres, as it is the only form of work her family knows: 'Mother was in the Profession [acting], and so was her mother, and her grandmother.'[65] Having lost her father, she is responsible for an alcoholic mother who now runs a rag shop. The joint pressures that her working conditions and the care of her mother exert on Dolly are evident throughout the story. Dolly takes care of the household chores despite being 'very tired, because she had come from the grand rehearsal, which had lasted nearly four hours'; as a result, 'she was glad to think that she need not rehearse on Christmas Day, that to-morrow she would have a holiday'.[66] Harkness's use of Christmas in this story for a Christian religious readership served to emphasize the different meaning of the concept for a nine-year-old child already worn down by more responsibility than she can bear. Harkness wrote:

> A peal of bells was heard then, sharp and clear, telling little Dolly that it was Christmas. The bells sent a thrill through her. She could not tell why it was that they made her feel hopeful. She had not spent many happy Christmases; but she was young, and all young things have hope in them.

Dolly's hopefulness is sharply contrasted with her squalid surroundings and the story's tragic ending. Like Hans Christian Andersen's little match girl, the best she can hope for is death; dying, she exclaims: 'I've seen my daddy. He's in such a beautiful place, and he's going to take me there for Christmas.'[67] Dramatizations like these lent imaginative immediacy to less evocative texts like the NVA's campaign pamphlets; and Harkness made increasing use of this strategy of visualizing tragedies of poverty in her fiction. Where Black set out to reason her middle-class readers into the necessity of embracing activism with articles such as 'The Morality of Buying in the Cheapest Market', Harkness produced *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, a harrowing story of an unemployed widowed seamstress driven to infanticide and later suicide after she and her baby have been subjected to slow starvation. These portrayals are deliberately

[65] Law, 'A Pantomime Child'.
[66] Law, 'A Pantomime Child'.
[67] Law, 'A Pantomime Child'.

uncompromising to increase their emotional impact: Harkness told her interviewer in the *Evening News* that, when a reader informed her that she had not slept for two nights after reading *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, she had responded: 'I hope it will keep you awake for a week, and others too, to think about it.'[68] The emotional responses her dramatizations produced were thus intended to encourage readers to question the economic circumstances that they reflected.

The fact that Harkness began her novel-writing project in tandem with her social investigation suggests that the two strands of her writing project constituted an exploration of the potential of visualizing the conditions she observed. The domestic focus of *A City Girl* probably derived from her experiences in the model workers' dwellings Katharine Buildings, very slightly fictionalized in the novel as Charlotte's Buildings. The novel exposed the disempowerment of the eponymous protagonist Nelly, a young female blackleg worker in the home-based, sweated garment trade. Initially she is able to reach high levels of production and her sweated work allows her to support herself and her family and gives her a degree of freedom and independence.[69] Harkness noted: 'In the East End girls come and go at all hours of the day and night without comment, especially "hands," like Nelly, who help to pay the rent.'[70] Dissatisfied with her surroundings and her unloving family, and dreaming of 'ladyhood', however, Nelly falls in love with Arthur Grant, a middle-class married man from Kensington, who has taken on a secretaryship at the Whitechapel hospital, and occasionally speaks at the local Radical Club.[71] Their affair begins because Nelly has no other means of escape from her ceaseless work; she meets Grant just when she feels that '[a]ll the week she had been hard at work bending over her machine, finishing off long rows of stiches; before she began another week like the last she sorely wanted a little

[68] 'A Slum-Story Writer'.
[69] Mutch, 'Introduction', in Law, *A City Girl*, ed. by Mutch, pp. 19, 21.
[70] Law, *A City Girl* (1890), p. 66.
[71] Law, *A City Girl* (1890), p. 11.

diversion, a little amusement'.[72] Once she falls pregnant, she is dismissed from her job and ejected from her family home. The destitution that immediately follows on her becoming unemployed and homeless reveals her absolute reliance on her sweated work; deprived of her access to independence, she becomes dependent on charity. Her working-class lover, George, takes her to Captain Lobe, the Salvation Army representative who would become the protagonist of Harkness's 1888 serial novel. The Salvation Army gives Nelly a home and supports her through her pregnancy and the birth of her child; it also finds her new employment, though still under sweating conditions. When the baby suddenly falls ill and dies, she is unable to stop working even in the midst of her grief, because '"[h]ands" must work, even if they have dead babies'.[73] The death of the child eventually gives Nelly a means of escape from her blackleg existence, as George asks her to marry him and join him as a caretaker in a utopian commune of writers outside London, but as her access to this job depends on her marriage to George Nelly is unlikely to regain her economic independence. Nelly's opportunities and abilities are thus undermined by the double impact of the economic and sexual exploitation to which her blackleg identity exposes her. The cover of the second, shilling edition of the novel (1890) visualizes these dual pressures on Nelly by depicting her in a bare, empty, comfortless room, wedged between the baby's cot and her sewing machine, one hand holding her child's, the other holding a piece of material in her lap (Fig. 4).

[72] Law, *A City Girl* (1890), pp. 55–56.
[73] Law, *A City Girl* (1890), p. 167.

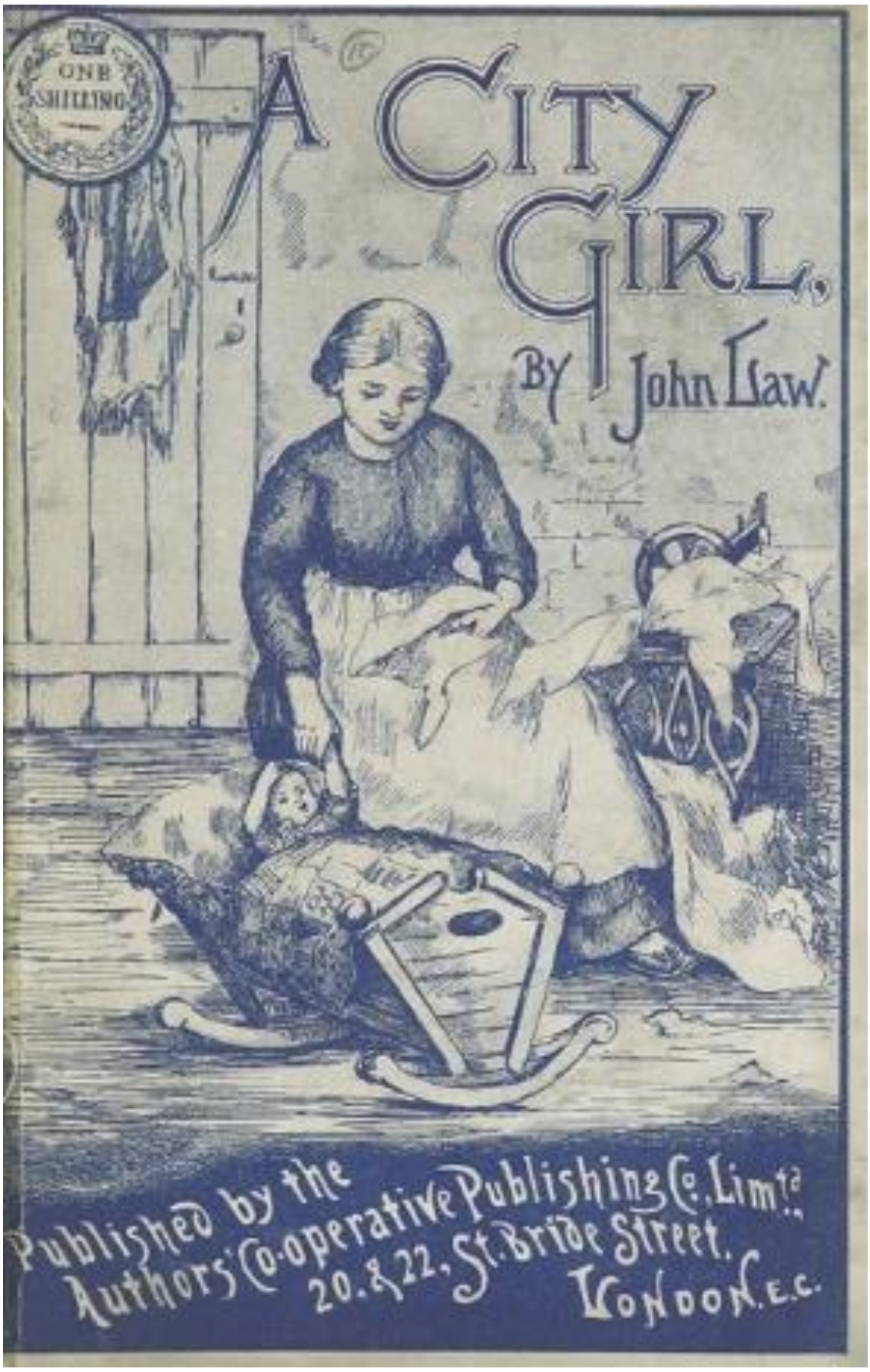

Figure 4: Cover of the 'Shilling Series' edition of *A City Girl* (London: Author's Co-operative Publishing Company, 1890). British Library, London.

Like 'A Pantomime Child', *A City Girl* worked with existing discourses and tropes to expose blackleg experience, and Harkness's readers made the connection between *A City Girl* and more canonical incarnations of the cross-class seduction narrative. In 1890, a review of the second edition of the novel in the *Woman's World* compared Nelly to Hetty Sorrel in *Adam Bede* (1859) by George Eliot. The periodical had comfortably accommodated articles by Black on the conditions of women's blackleg work in the garment trade and bar work in 1888 and 1890, but resisted the images of blackleg life that Harkness's novel presented.[74] It stated that 'John Law entirely lacks the charm, power, and knowledge of the human heart displayed by George Eliot in her masterpiece'. Nevertheless the review did suggest that Harkness's visualization of Nelly's circumstances was effective, as it admitted: 'There is, however, more excuse for the City girl, with her sordid surroundings, and want of wholesome rational amusement.'[75] The early descriptions of Nelly as vain and thoughtless, as far as her situation allows, certainly mirror Eliot's first portrait of Hetty so closely that it may well be taken as evidence of self-conscious cross-referencing. Eliot wrote:

> Hetty's dreams were all of luxuries: to sit in a carpeted parlour and always wear white stockings; to have some large beautiful earrings, such as were all the fashion; to have Nottingham lace round the top of her gown, and something to make her handkerchief smell nice …[76]

Nelly's fantasies of ladyhood follow the same pattern of disconnected but pleasing, because unfamiliar, images:

> To sit on a sofa, to read a novelette, to sip coffee with a teaspoon, to have someone to put on and take off her boots, was her idea of being a lady. […] A life of complete idleness, with plenty of smart clothes, and good things to eat, was all the ladyhood Nelly coveted.[77]

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[74] See, for instance, Clementina Black, 'Something about Needlewomen', *Woman's World*, ed. by Oscar Wilde (London: Cassell, 1888), pp. 300–04, 'The Morality of Buying in the Cheapest Market', *Woman's World* (London: Cassell, 1890), pp. 42–44, and 'The Grievances of Barmaids', *Woman's World* (London: Cassell, 1890), pp. 383–85.
[75] 'Reviews and Notices', in *Woman's World* (London: Cassell, 1890), pp. 556–57 (p. 556).
[76] George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985 [first published 1859]), p. 144.
[77] Law, *A City Girl* (1890), pp. 10–11.

Both Hetty and Nelly conceive of an ideal existence based on visual and sensory ideas; the use of this strategy to reflect Nelly's hope of escape mirrored Harkness's visualization of her actual circumstances for the reader's benefit. Further images and incidents in the novel worked, as the reviewer grudgingly suggested, to produce more sympathy for Nelly than Eliot's reproach of Hetty allowed: Nelly's circumstances could not prompt Hetty's reflection that 'her home had been a happy one'.[78] Unlike Hetty, Nelly shows sympathy for her neighbours, buying sweets for the children and pursuing friendships with people more vulnerable than herself, such as her elderly or disabled neighbours. While Hetty abandons her baby, furthermore, Nelly shows strong maternal care towards her child. When her brother offers to allow her to return to their home on the condition that she puts her child out to nurse, she responds: 'Do you think I'd part with my baby? […] my own little baby.'[79] The merging of the literary trope of the fallen woman with a more contemporary incarnation of a blackleg worker increased the immediacy of the narrative; while Eliot's characters existed in a distant eighteenth-century pastoral, Harkness's novel presented itself as a mirror to contemporary realities. Her strategy was not dissimilar to Black's use of historical settings to explore contemporary social problems; Harkness, too, made use of her readers' understanding of genre and narrative to raise an extant problem. Instead of visualizing contemporary problems in a historical setting, however, she evoked tropes from narratives whose setting distanced them from the reader, and lent them a contemporary urgency.

Harkness's visualization of the effects of poverty in *A City Girl* was influenced by the contentious new genre of naturalism. It is likely that she was already familiar with the work of Zola before the appearance of his naturalist manifesto in Britain, included in translation in the English edition of *Thérèse Raquin* issued by Vizetelly in

[78] Eliot, p. 417.
[79] Law, *A City Girl* (1890), p. 125.

the same year as *A City Girl*.[80] Her alignment of her first novel with naturalism would have been evident to many contemporary readers because of her choice of publisher and her description of her novels as 'realistic'. The subtitles 'A Realistic Story' for *A City Girl* and 'A Realistic Story of To-day' for *A Manchester Shirtmaker* echoed subtitles given to a wide body of naturalist fiction that was generally foreign and often controversial. In the Vizetelly sales catalogue appended to the first edition of *A City Girl*, the phrases 'A Realistic Story' or 'A Realistic Novel' are attached to a variety of novels including English translations of Zola, Eleanor Marx's English translation of *Madame Bovary* (1856) by Gustave Flaubert, several novels by Irish naturalist George Moore, and, as 'Russian Realistic Novels', to the work of Lev Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoyevsky.[81] Beate Kaspar reads Harkness's first novel as an attempt to make naturalism acceptable to a broad readership in Britain. Her analysis of Harkness's style of literary realism identifies a number of compromises that bring it closer to an older and less controversial tradition of writing about the working poor. They include: a more sentimental approach to characters and subject matter than was current in French naturalism; more authorial explanations; and increased circumspection in addressing sexuality and brutality.[82] The novel also had a happier ending than most naturalist texts, although as a resolution to the story, and for Nelly personally, the possibility of happiness is at the very least ambiguous. If she compromised on the depiction of sex and violence, the use of naturalist writing strategies did allow Harkness to make her visualizations of poverty more shocking: laying a claim to representing reality allowed her work to withstand accusations of poor taste from reviews such as that in the *Woman's World*.

[80] Émile Zola, 'Preface to the Second French Edition', in *Thérèse Raquin: A Realistic Novel* (London: Vizetelly, 1887), pp. v–xii.
[81] 'Vizetelly & Co.'s New Books, and New Editions', in John Law, *A City Girl* (London: Vizetelly, 1887), pp. 1–32. Zola's novels are listed on pp. 2 and 22–23, *Madame Bovary* on p. 2, Moore's novels on pp. 1 and 19, and the 'Russian Realistic Novels' on pp. 6–7.
[82] Kaspar, pp. 84–85.

Despite her claim to realism, however, Harkness's representation did sometimes pursue poignancy over accuracy in order to increase the impact of her narrative. In allowing Nelly to survive and begin a new life at the end of the novel, she was willing to challenge the narrative convention of the death of the fallen woman that had determined even those nineteenth-century stories that showed themselves in sympathy with their fallen protagonist, such as *Adam Bede* or *Ruth* (1853) by Elizabeth Gaskell. Even the famous later incarnation of the story, Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1892), which Black hailed for its progressive treatment of female subjectivity, saw no escape for Tess except death. As it included the death of the baby, however, Harkness's story did not consider the possibility of Nelly and her child surviving independently together — a narrative development that would have been made possible by the conditions she described. The work of the Salvation Army allowed Harkness to reframe the concept of fallenness for the purposes of the novel: Captain Lobe and the sergeant who accommodates Nelly do not take a moral standpoint on her sexual transgression. This was part of the Salvation Army's official position on unmarried motherhood. The so-called rescue homes for single pregnant women were still a very new branch of Salvation Army work in 1887, but the section pertaining to the 'Rescue Department of the Women's Social Work' in the *Orders and Regulations* for Salvation Army institutions published in 1898 reflects the reasoning underpinning the support they offered to single mothers. In this manual, William Booth recommended that,

> although it will usually be found advisable that the responsibility of supporting her child should rest upon the mother, it is nevertheless desirable that we should use all necessary means to help her to properly discharge that responsibility and to aid her in providing for the care and training of her child.[83]

So far from striving to separate mother and child on moral grounds, the Salvation Army regulations clearly set out the desirability of keeping mother and child together

[83] William Booth, *Orders and Regulations for the Social Officers of The Salvation Army* (London: Salvation Army International Headquarters, 1898), p. 277.

wherever possible: even in cases where adoption was deemed in the mother's and child's best interest, it was preferred to have the child adopted by family or friends of the mother.[84] In the novel, this sentiment was translated into Captain Lobe's practical intervention to place Nelly in the sergeant's safe home environment and find her work to support herself and her child, and in Lobe's and the sergeant's non-judgmental treatment of Nelly. Other nineteenth-century initiatives to rehabilitate fallen women generally baulked at the idea of allowing a woman to raise her illegitimate child: for instance, Charles Dickens and Angela Burdett-Coutts turned women with children away from Urania Cottage.[85]

In *A City Girl*, however, the child's death functioned to emphasize Nelly's disempowerment. Her encounter with Grant when she has collected the child's corpse from the hospital allowed Harkness to expose the thoughtlessness of his exploitation of Nelly. His response to the situation is: 'Of course he was dreadfully sorry.'[86] The fact that George is willing to be reconciled with Nelly once her baby has died produces the discomfort of the ending that suggests she will lose her independence completely. These evocative scenes dispense with a real possibility of Nelly supporting herself and her child in order to emphasize the way she is trapped by her economic circumstances. Dorothee Beckhoff points out that *A City Girl* seems to follow a circular movement: no material social change is effected by Nelly's experiences.[87] What Dan Bivona and Roger B. Henkle call the 'desultory and fatalistic' action of the novel is read by Beckhoff as an effective indictment of the social wrongs Harkness describes.[88] She states that 'Nelly Ambrose may be saved, but the text leaves no doubt that social

[84] Booth, *Orders and Regulations*, pp. 283, 344.
[85] Jenny Hartley, *Charles Dickens and the House of Fallen Women* (London: Methuen, 2008), pp. 61–62.
[86] Law, *A City Girl* (1890), p. 165.
[87] Dorothee Beckhoff, 'Thomas Martin Wheeler und Margaret E. Harkness: Zwei Wegbereiter des socialistischen Romans im 19. Jahrhundert', in *Radikalismus in Literatur und Gesellschaft des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Gregory Claeys and Liselotte Glage (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1987), pp. 125–43 (p. 137).
[88] Dan Bivona and Roger B. Henkle, *The Imagination of Class: Masculinity and the Victorian Urban Poor* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), p. 89.

wrongs will cast many more Nellys into despair'.[89] *A City Girl* thus had a clear representative function in visualizing the different aspects of powerlessness to which women like Nelly may be subject.

The title of *Out of Work* suggests a move away from the domesticity of *A City Girl* into more overtly political and economic discourse; this context is underlined by the dedication to John Law of Lauriston. Like Nelly, the protagonist of *Out of Work*, Joseph 'Jos' Coney, is a blackleg worker despite possessing the skills to produce valuable work; but, where Nelly's blackleg status puts her under a constant pressure to produce, Jos becomes a blackleg because he does not have access to regular employment. A carpenter, he leaves his home in a provincial village because of a shortage of work, but he finds that, in London, he is reckoned 'nothing but a village artist'.[90] Unable to find remunerative work in his own profession, he competes for casual labour at the docks, spends nights in doss houses, sleeps rough in Trafalgar Square, becomes increasingly dependent on alcohol, stays overnight in a workhouse, and is arrested. Jos's masculine identity allowed Harkness to use him as the reader's guide to localities, like the doss house and gin shops, where Nelly, as a young woman, was less able to go; together the two books functioned as windows on different aspects of urban poverty. The novels emphasized the emotional impact of chronic poverty: both characters initially value honesty and respectability, but their socio-economic circumstances place these ideals beyond their reach as they find themselves alone and friendless. *Out of Work* ended with a final tragic image: Jos has died of starvation after walking back to his village, but the jury dismisses malnutrition as a cause of death. Harkness commented:

> The doctor said that his death must have been brought about by starvation, for his body was nothing but skin and bone, he had scarcely

[89] Beckhoff, p. 137.
[90] Law, *Out of Work*, p. 61.

> any flesh. But the jury did not agree in their verdict, because a penny was found in his [Jos's] waistcoat pocket.[91]

Harkness left the reader to suppose that the coin may have had sentimental value for Jos as a kind of talisman, as it was given to him before he left London by his friend, a homeless flower seller called the Squirrel who had taken care of him in his destitution. As in *A City Girl* and *Toilers*, Harkness suggested here that personal emotion survived in spite of acute economic pressures; even though prolonged financial instability has a degenerative effect on Jos, he is not brutalized.

The more overtly political context in which *Out of Work*'s exploration of the moral and emotional consciousness of blackleg workers was cast may well have been linked to Harkness's own political involvement at the time of the novel's publication. 1888 marked the beginning of her active participation in the labour movement: during the summer she would give financial support to the Matchwomen's Strike.[92] Her project of giving workers access to political power also included encouraging them to make use of their enfranchisement. A letter, probably from 1888, to Graham Wallas, a leader of the Fabian Society, sets out her ideas for a pamphlet to be distributed to East End voters with instructions on how to exercise their right to vote.[93] As critics like Beckhoff and Lynne Hapgood note, however, Jos does not develop a political consciousness. Hapgood characterizes Jos as 'unemployed, silent and socially invisible', a character who enabled Harkness to 'explore a state of political impotence'.[94] Beckhoff describes Jos as representing a mass of workers who, through an absence of class solidarity, are 'doomed to speechless and lonely demise'.[95] Jos is drawn to political discourse, but never engages with it; he becomes embroiled in the Bloody Sunday riots by accident

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[91] Law, *Out of Work*, p. 279.
[92] Harkness is listed as having donated £1 to the Matchwomen's strike fund in 'The Strike Fund', *Link*, 21 July 1888, p. 4.
[93] LSE, Letters to [Graham] Wallas, Wallas/1/7, Margaret Harkness to Graham Wallas, dated 188– [probably 1888].
[94] Lynne Hapgood, 'The Novel and Political Agency: Socialism and the Work of Margaret Harkness, Constance Howell and Clementina Black: 1888–1896', *Literature & History*, 5.2 (1996), 37–52 (p. 46).
[95] Beckhoff, p. 138.

when he stays to 'see the fun', only to be unjustly charged with assaulting a police officer.[96] These episodes are suggestive of the ways contemporary political discourse left blackleg workers like Jos behind: weakened by hunger and desperation, he is unable to participate in movements of resistance. Like Nelly, he is left utterly disempowered by the end of the novel: the jury's refusal to acknowledge the manner of his death deprives him even of the posthumous chance to bring to light the economic iniquities under which he suffered. While *A City Girl* responded to popular literary representations of poverty conditions, then, *Out of Work* may be seen as a response to political discourse. Its images of the conditions that produced blackleg work indicated that contemporary politics must accommodate blackleg workers or continue to be undermined by their presence. Harkness made clear that blackleg work was not the product of an inherent opposition of interests between blacklegs and workers who sought improved working conditions, but rather that workers in extreme poverty were driven to blackleg work by their desperation. Without support and recognition, they would continue to undersell other workers and work during strikes; with support, they could be incorporated into the labour movement and defend the same interests.

If *Out of Work* highlighted the political failure to address the conditions of blackleg workers, *Captain Lobe*, begun in serial form shortly after the publication of *Out of Work*, gave an insight into one organization's attempts to help the working poor by alleviating the effects of extreme poverty. The initial serial in the *British Weekly* was a deliberate response to a broad interest in the Salvation Army, which was expanding its work beyond London into other British cities and also abroad. In 1887, the *British Weekly* had shown its curiosity about the Salvation Army when it awarded a prize for a reader essay in response to the question '[h]as the influence of the Salvation Army been

[96] Law, *Out of Work*, pp. 196, 203–04.

on the whole beneficial or otherwise?'.[97] Harkness's personal experience of the Army's work made her a good candidate to introduce this still new organization to the periodical's readers. As its narrative followed Salvation Army workers in their work in slum neighbourhoods across London, it gave ample scope for Harkness's use of images and anecdotes to portray poverty conditions: the structure is one of vignettes connected by the characters of Captain Lobe and Ruth, the heiress to a confectionery factory in east London who is training to join the Salvation Army and who is inducted into the working and living conditions of her employees by the factory's labour mistress. These vignettes allowed Harkness to portray a wider variety of poverty conditions than she had been able to do in *A City Girl* and *Out of Work*.

The portraits of poverty in *Captain Lobe* were based on Harkness's own investigations in the company of a real Salvation Army captain called David Leib. The 1925 reprint of the 1915 Hodder and Stoughton edition of *Captain Lobe* held in the Salvation Army International Heritage Centre is identified as 'Captain Lobe (Leib)'.[98] Seth Koven states that '[William] Booth assigned Leib to develop his social work programs in Whitechapel in 1887 and 1888 when he guided Harkness's investigation into the Army's methods', but it is likely that these investigations actually happened a year or two earlier.[99] Leib's own contributions to the *War Cry* show that he was stationed in Whitechapel from January or February until June 1886, a period that coincides with Harkness's residence in Katharine Buildings.[100] By 1887, when he first

[97] 'The "British Weekly" Prizes', *British Weekly*, 4 February 1887, p. 14.
[98] A sticker on the volume held in the Salvation Army International Heritage Centre, London, reads 'Captain Lobe (Leib)'. The entry for the volume in the online catalogue states that the story is '[a]pparently based on David Lobe [*sic*] (see The Officer, September 1918, p252)'. Catalogue reference RARE BOOKS/288 <http://www.calmview.eu/SalvationArmy/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=RARE+BOOKS%2f288&pos=1> [accessed 27 April 2017].
[99] Koven, 'Social Question', p. 51.
[100] Leib's first report from Whitechapel appeared in the *War Cry* on 20 February. A report on his 'farewell' from Whitechapel, to go on to Holloway, was published on 3 July. David Leib, 'Whitechapel', *War Cry*, 20 February 1886, p. 6, and Wm. H. Witts, 'Whitechapel', 3 July 1886, p. 12. I am grateful to Steven Spencer, archivist at the Salvation Army International Heritage Centre, and to Clare Falvey for tracing these articles for me.

appeared in Harkness's work, Lobe was stationed in Yorkshire, having also worked in Holloway and Luton since leaving Whitechapel.[101] The Salvation Army press professed its appreciation of Harkness's portrayal of Leib and his activities. As late as September 1918, an entry in the *Officer*, a publication aimed specifically at Salvation Army officers, urged readers: 'if you want to read a romance buy "*Captain Lobe*," a story founded upon the life and work years ago of Captain Leib and Captain Rollinson [*sic*], the Major and Mrs. Leib of to-day.'[102] That the character Ruth, who marries Lobe in the novel, was based on Captain Annie Rollisson seems unlikely: Leib met Rollisson, then a Salvation Army sergeant leading a lodging-house brigade, in Keighley, Yorkshire, in 1887.[103] They married in 1889, when both *A City Girl* and *Captain Lobe* had already been published.[104] In the various published versions of *Captain Lobe*, the protagonist leaves Britain for the colonies in 1886 and is due to return at the end of 1888 to marry Ruth. There seems to have been no question of Leib's going abroad until 1899, when he and his wife were posted to Barbados and later to Jamaica, Gibraltar, India, and what is now Myanmar.[105] The character of Lobe, then, appears to have been Harkness's invention where any details barring his personal appearance, character, and approach to his Salvation Army work were concerned. His attitude to his work, however, proved fruitful for Harkness's exploration of the conflicts in different organizations' strategies for supporting the working poor.

In the novel, Lobe is introduced as 'no milk-and-water religionist': 'If he consigned a sinner to the burning pit, he gave the sinner half of his own dinner to eat on the journey, and recognized the fact that a man's soul has an intimate relationship with a

[101] R. T., 'David Leib's Two-Fold Inheritance', *All the World*, May 1926, pp. 201–05 (p. 202). I am grateful to Steven Spencer for tracing these references for me.
[102] 'Personalia', *Officer*, September 1918, pp. 251–52 (p. 252).
[103] R. T., p. 202.
[104] 'Gazette', *War Cry*, 16 November 1889, p. 8.
[105] Details of David and Annie Leib's postings around the world are given in R. T., p. 204, and 'Loved to Win Souls', *War Cry*, 13 February 1932, pp. 6, 12 (p. 12).

man's stomach.'[106] He confides to another character, an agnostic and disillusioned socialist who is very probably a version of Harkness herself, that he is ready to leave the Salvation Army 'directly I find any religious organization that is more in earnest'.[107] Lobe, here, provided a direct foil to the hypocrisy of the Methodist ministers in *Out of Work* who are embarrassed to be confronted by a man who asks them whether they know what it is to be hungry, and who eventually 'silenced his questions' with a penny.[108] While Booth acknowledged in his introduction to *In Darkest London* that 'the author […] is in many respects very far from accepting our [the Salvation Army's] discipline, or subscribing to our theology', the novel clearly lauded Lobe's religious practice as it inspired a practical response to poverty.[109] Lobe recognized what *A City Girl* and *Out of Work* suggested: that conceptions of virtue were altered by financial pressures. By portraying blackleg workers through Lobe's forgiving eyes, the novel emphasized the point that they were damaged by an unforgiving economic system.

In contrast to Harkness's earlier novels, *Captain Lobe* put forward a way of engaging with the effects of economic iniquity: alongside the social problems it depicted, it also presented Salvationists' responses to them. Its representative project was somewhat compromised by this focus on the Salvation Army, however. Where her first novels had sought to represent the experiences of blackleg workers through striking visualizations, the vignettes held together by the presence of the Salvation Army distanced the reader from the blackleg workers whose situations were shown. *Captain Lobe* was a rescue narrative in ways that the re-writing of the fallen woman trope in *A City Girl* was not; it traced, not the stories of the inhabitants of slum neighbourhoods themselves, but the activities of one of the external influences in the slums that aimed to

[106] John Law, *In Darkest London: A New and Popular Edition of* Captain Lobe A Story of the Salvation Army (London: Reeves, 1893 [first published under this title in 1891]), p. 11. This edition is a reprint of the original 1891 William Reeves edition which formed part of the Bellamy Library.
[107] Law, *In Darkest London*, p. 160.
[108] Law, *Out of Work*, p. 14.
[109] William Booth, 'Introduction', in Law, *In Darkest London*, pp. i–ii (p. i).

help people unable to 'help [themselves]', as Engels put it.[110] The focus on Lobe and Ruth as the protagonists meant that the reader's sympathy could be directed towards them, and was not complicated by the impulse to sustain feelings of sympathy for the socially transgressive Nelly and Jos. Aided by the seasonal appearance of the final instalment, the initial serial publication ended by inviting reader sympathy for Ruth who, after a two-year wait, 'expects [Captain Lobe] home this Christmas' from his postings abroad so they could at last be married.[111] The characters with the least subjectivity in *Captain Lobe* were the inhabitants of the slum neighbourhoods: besides Ruth and Lobe, the most prominent characters who comment on the situation in the slums are the agnostic lady who gives her own time and money to alleviating poverty, a slum doctor who devotes his medical expertise and social engagement to starving people in chronic poverty, and the labour mistress in Ruth's factory — each of whom knows the slum neighbourhoods well, but does not straightforwardly belong to them in the same way as the working poor who were the subject of the Army's ministrations. The only exploited worker to speak is Napoleon, a performer in a 'penny gaff', and his situation revealed the extent of his powerlessness. The fact that he works as a performer made his portrayal the ultimate visualization of exploitation; his isolation means that he can find no support barring that of Captain Lobe and the agnostic. This was cruelly emphasized by the novel's description of his attempt to join the Salvation Army:

> Even in the Salvation hall people stared and laughed, because a dwarf had come there to sing and pray, because a midget had joined the Army! Napoleon hid his pale face in the cocked hat; so no one guessed that he was saying to himself, 'This world's just hell for midgets.'[112]

The way Napoleon is left behind by all contemporary discourses is reflected by a deathbed conversation he has with the agnostic, who promises him a future of social change into which it will be safe for him to reincarnate because 'all men will be

[110] Engels, p. 115.
[111] John Law, 'Captain Lobe', *British Weekly*, 14 December 1888, p. 102.
[112] Law, *In Darkest London*, p. 33.

brethren' and 'love will be strong, even down here in Whitechapel; and this earth will be heaven'.[113] This emphasized Napoleon's isolation from the other inhabitants of Whitechapel, however, as it is suggested that he would only be received as equal following fundamental change. While Napoleon is an exploited worker, working under blackleg conditions because few other possibilities of employment appear to be open to him, he is distanced from other blackleg workers like those portrayed elsewhere in Harkness's novels and journalism. Napoleon ultimately functioned primarily to reflect the big-hearted and non-judgmental nature of the agnostic and Captain Lobe.

That the portrayal of the Salvation Army was at least as important as its representation of blackleg workers, if not more, in generating interest in the novel was reflected in contemporary commentaries from Britain and abroad. The representation of an organization that took practical steps to alleviate poverty conditions drew wide-ranging commendation, but risked dehumanizing the people it sought to help. In 1892, the St Petersburg-based cultural journal *Russkaia starina* [Russian old times] 'warmly recommend[ed]' a Russian translation of the novel to its readers for its portrayal of 'the slum life of the English proletariat and the philanthropic activities of the renowned religious and moral society of Wm. Booth'.[114] The Russian translation of the novel had been printed in book form in 1892, after having been serialized in the periodical *Knizhki nedeli* [The book of the week] in 1891.[115] The review's summary of the novel seems to present it as a kind of slumming by proxy as it gave the reader access to images of an 'English proletariat' represented as helpless and in need of 'philanthropic activities'.

For some socialist activists, too, the work of the Salvation Army appears to have been of greater interest than the representation of poverty and blackleg conditions in themselves. In an 1889 letter to *Justice*, Harkness mentioned that Regina Zadek

[113] Law, *In Darkest London*, p. 71.
[114] N. V. Vodovozov, 'Kapitan Armii Spaseniia (Captain Lob). Roman Dzhona Lau', *Russkaia starina*, 73 (1892), 840, transl. by Carl Moody. I am grateful to Sasha Dovzhyk for discovering this reference and to Carl Moody for offering background information on *Russkaia Starina*.
[115] See 'Kapitan Armii Spaseniia'.

Bernstein, wife of the exiled German social democrat Eduard Bernstein, had 'written to me asking if she may translate it [*Captain Lobe*] into German'.[116] Regina Bernstein found a political platform for her translation in *Vorwärts: Berliner Volksblatt* [Forwards: Berlin people's periodical], the central organ of the German Social-Democratic Party, in 1891, and her explanatory preface seemed intended to win over her German socialist readers to the concept of what she called 'a religious propaganda society for the Christian church in general'.[117] Throughout the text, she provided at least as many explanatory footnotes about the Salvation Army as she offered explanations of terms related to life in deprived areas of London. Bernstein's translation, which provided an introduction to the Salvation Army for a German audience, deliberately gave German-language equivalents for words associated with and used by the Salvation Army. 'Slum sisters' or 'saviours' became *Höhlenschwestern* or *Höhlenretterinnen*, and the *War Cry* was referred to as the *Kriegsruf*.[118] While she was careful to keep the setting identifiable as the East End of London, Bernstein ensured that her readers had a clear sense of the people and sights being described. Thus, for instance, the penny gaff became a *Pennybude* [penny booth] or *Penny-Ausstellungspalast* [penny exhibition palace].[119] Terms like 'roughs' and 'loafer', however, were left untranslated, with explanations given in footnotes or parentheses; Bernstein described the 'loafer' as a 'Strassenbummler des East-End'.[120] The word *Bummler* is generally translated as 'loafer', so it is clear that Bernstein's adoption of the English word was meant to give a sense of a social type particular to the streets [*Strassen*] of east London. It is likely that readers of *Vorwärts* were expected to map the novel's depictions of London poverty on

[116] John Law, 'A Reflection: To the Editor of *Justice*', *Justice*, 20 April 1889, p. 3.
[117] Regina Bernstein, 'Vorwort', in John Law, 'Kapitän Lobe', *Vorwärts: Berliner Volksblatt*, 21 July 1891, unpaginated (pp. 1–2 (p. 1)).
[118] Law, 'Kapitän Lobe', *Vorwärts*, 22 July 1891, unpaginated (p. 3), 23 July 1892, unpaginated (p. 1), and 25 July 1891, unpaginated (p. 3), resp.
[119] Law, 'Kapitän Lobe', *Vorwärts*, 21 July 1891, unpaginated (p. 3), and 6 August 1891, unpaginated (p. 1).
[120] Law, 'Kapitän Lobe', *Vorwärts*, 21 July 1891, unpaginated (p. 2).

to their own knowledge of similar conditions in Berlin and elsewhere in Germany, and therefore to deduce that the Salvation Army had a role to play in Germany too. The novel aspect of the story, however, was the Salvation Army and its project, and this seems to have drawn greater attention than the conditions that both the narrative and the Salvation Army sought to address.

Harkness herself appears to have considered the representations of poverty to be the focus of *Captain Lobe*. She traded on her authority as its author in a letter to the editor of the *Daily News*, in which she entered a discussion on the question of charitable interference in the East End. Emphasizing her personal experience of poverty in east London, she wrote:

> Perhaps as I am the writer of 'Captain Lobe' you will allow me to point out what is, I think, the only way to remove the misery, squalor, and destitution of which you speak in your article on East London of 17th inst. Others could write with greater authority than myself; but as they remain silent I think it is my duty to tell what I have learnt whilst living amidst 'the misery, squalor, destitution, and wickedness' against which moral and religious agencies have been, as you say, comparatively unavailing.[121]

Her words suggest that the novel was primarily intended to document various conditions of urban poverty, and to suggest possible remedies. The wide scope of the Salvation Army's work allowed her to show her readers places and conditions that she had not been able to incorporate into the more tightly structured narratives of *A City Girl* or *Out of Work*. The novel's broad appeal, furthermore, allowed her to sidestep politics while bringing the Salvation Army's methods for ameliorating the immediate material conditions of the blackleg workers to a diverse audience, from political activists to middle-class philanthropists. As she stated, however, philanthropic solutions proved 'comparatively unavailing' against chronic poverty, and she ended her letter by expressing support for the Dockworkers' Strike, as organization for better pay would allow workers to escape blackleg conditions themselves. Particularly her reference to

[121] Law, 'To the Editor of the *Daily News*'.

the overall ineffectiveness of 'moral and religious agencies' suggests that *Captain Lobe* was not intended to override the experience of blackleg workers in order to praise the Salvation Army; instead, her use of vignettes was another experiment in visualizing poverty conditions.

Harkness's final 'slum story', *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, returned to a narrative structure centring on an individual blackleg worker's experience, inviting a different reaction from that which *Captain Lobe* had received. The novel's cover gave a central position to the sense of powerlessness that characterized the conditions of the protagonist, the eponymous shirt-maker Mary Dillon. It showed Mary being stopped by a police officer as she leaves a church clutching the coffin of her baby, whom she has just killed (Fig. 5). The tall and immovable figure of the police officer provides a strong contrast with Mary who appears tiny, thin, and hunched over; positioned on the church steps, she is still smaller than the police officer. She looks hollow-eyed and delirious, which may suggest that her hunger and exhaustion have impaired her judgment. A formal funeral procession appears in the background as a contrast to Mary, alone with the baby's coffin, emphasizing that she has no access to the rites of a normal life, of which burial and mourning formed an integral part. As she has killed her child, furthermore, her right to mourn is not recognized. By emphasizing Mary's fragility in conjunction with her isolation from the rest of society, the cover highlighted the way the novel presented Mary's blackleg status as permeating her life story. Throughout the narrative she is an outsider whose access to the means to support herself is continually blocked.

The novel received mixed reviews at best. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, normally interested in and sympathetic to John Law's work and opinions, published a disappointed review that suggested this was due to its uncompromising portrayal of Mary's suffering. The review stated:

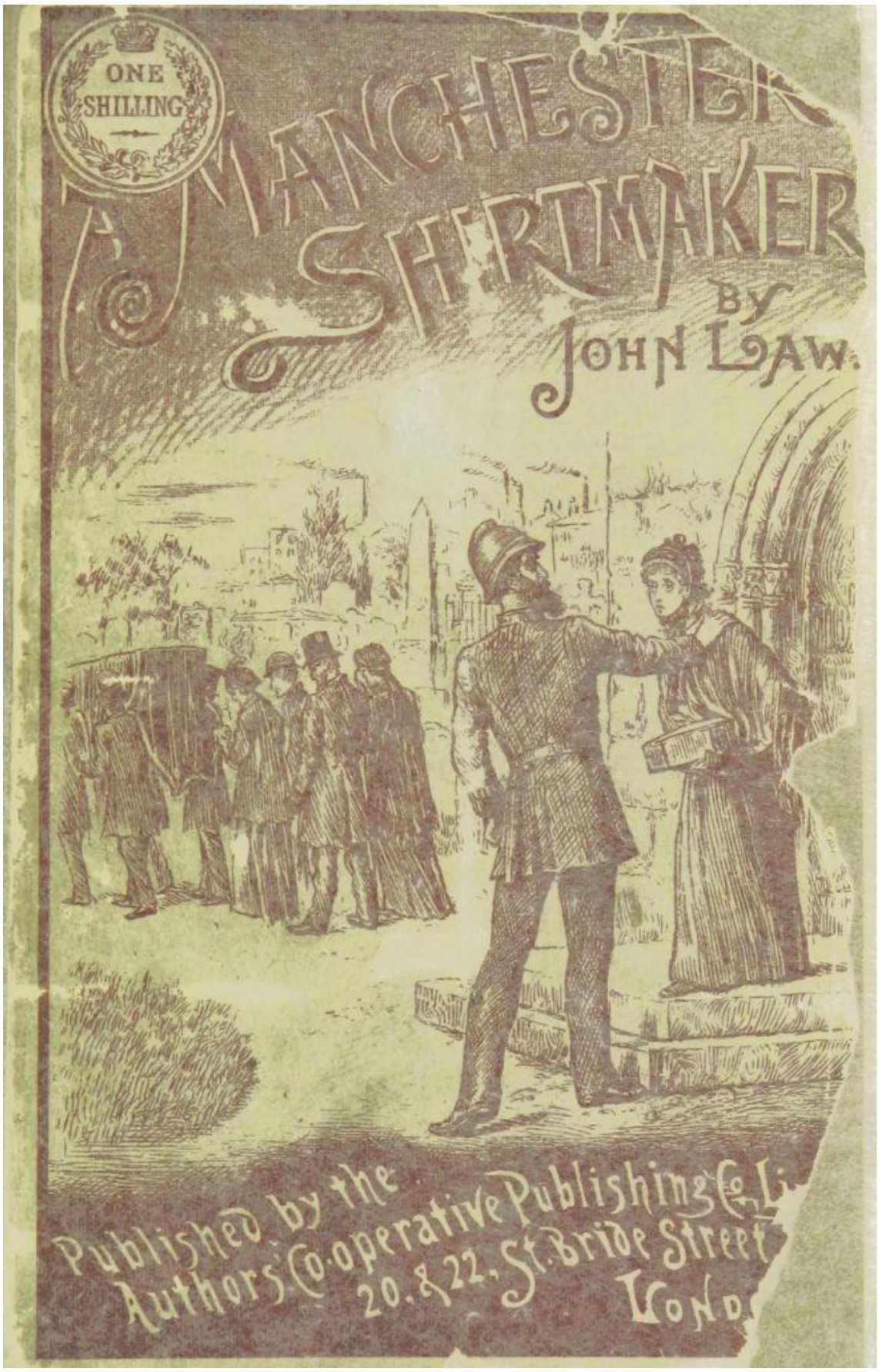

Figure 5: Cover of the 'Shilling Series' edition of *A Manchester Shirtmaker* (London: Author's Co-operative Publishing Company, 1890). British Library, London.

> How people do miss their opportunities! In 'A Manchester Shirtmaker' […] the lady who writes under the name of 'John Law' relates, in forcible and picturesque language enough, the story of a young widow's struggles against poverty […]. Throughout the whole time of her trouble she [Mary] has been able and willing to work, but is persistently left without employment through the coldness of the outside world, and underbid or swindled by the 'sweater.' Here, of course, occurs an excellent chance of pointing out the gigantic social danger looming ahead, when crying evils are allowed to flourish unchecked amongst a proletariat not utterly helpless, as of old, through ignorance and the absence of facilities for combination, but fed with the rays of modern enlightenment, and growing rapidly conscious of its power. Surely the writer must have seized with appreciative eagerness such an occasion for pointing a moral [*sic*] of import so tremendous. Not a bit of it. The tale begins and ends without a hint of any ulterior lesson being deducible from it. Misery is piled on misery, […] nor does a single bright episode relieve the continuous panorama of woe. What use can a tale like this serve?[122]

The review's description of Harkness's language as 'picturesque' seems not to refer to a specific literary genre or style, but rather to acknowledge the strength of the images the novel presented; in other words, it effectively visualized for the reader the experience of the protagonist. The review acknowledged the disempowerment of Mary's position within the novel, and did not question the realism of the narrative. It took issue, however, with the use to which Harkness put the visualization of Mary's circumstances. It objected to the fact that the novel made no attempt to alleviate the series of tragic images it presented, and offered no explicit moral or proposal for the improvement of the conditions described. I suggest, however, that to offer hope was not Harkness's priority in writing *A Manchester Shirtmaker*. The novel was written and published during periods of political disillusionment for Harkness. While carrying out investigations in Manchester in 1889, she wrote to *Justice* stating that socialist organizations 'are not a happy family, and sometimes our quarrels make it difficult for us to "sacrifice without cursing"'.[123] By 1890, her disappointment had set in at the failure of the Dockworkers' Strike to produce a wider effect, as she described in

[122] 'New Books', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 April 1890, p. 3.
[123] Law, 'A Reflection'.

'"Salvation" v. Socialism'. The visualizations of poverty in *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, as in *A City Girl*, appear intended to evoke an emotional response not necessarily based on accurate representations, but rather representative of Harkness's point that an adequate solution to economic iniquity had not yet been found, and no material attempts were made to address the conditions of blackleg work. In this sense, the *PMG*'s question regarding the use, or intended impact, of the novel, may have been beside the point Harkness was trying to make; she seemed more focused on shocking her readers than on offering suggestions for the alleviation of the conditions described.

Harkness's visualizations of London poverty were read by different activists as representative: Engels described *A City Girl* as told 'truly'; Schreiner, then a close acquaintance of Harkness, wrote to Potter with regard to *Out of Work* that she admired 'the little touches that are so true to life'; and Booth endorsed the scenes depicted in *Captain Lobe* as conveyed 'all too truthfully' in his introduction to *In Darkest London*.[124] In *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, however, the focus of Harkness's portrait of Mary's poverty seems to have been less on giving an accurate portrayal and more on evoking pathos by emphasizing Mary's disempowerment through poverty and isolation. Her depictions of poverty conditions in Manchester deliberately included details to reflect her perception that these situations were worse than what she had observed in London. A few months after the publication of *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, the *Australian Town and Country Journal* quoted Harkness who, it indicated, 'has resided in Manchester, studied the condition of the poor, and spends upon them all that she makes with her books', as saying: 'In my experiences of the slums of London I have seen nothing to compare with the Angel Meadow in Manchester. It is awful.'[125] In order to

[124] Engels, p. 115, LSE, Beatrice Potter correspondence, Passfield/2/1/2/9, fols 690–93, Olive Schreiner to Beatrice Potter, 1888, *Olive Schreiner Letters Online* <http://www.oliveschreiner.org/vre?view=collections&colid=125&letterid=1> [accessed 15 February 2015], and Booth, in Law, *In Darkest London*, p. ii.

[125] 'A Lady Leader in the Labor Party', *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 3 May 1890, p. 25. I am grateful to Terry Elkiss for bringing this article to my attention.

illustrate this 'awfulness', however, Harkness seems deliberately to have structured the story so as to circumvent any ameliorating circumstances. Despite the success of *Captain Lobe*, the Salvation Army was almost wholly absent from *A Manchester Shirtmaker*. Its only representative is a lamplighter, who thinks 'his mission was to "save" people by shouting', echoing the cry of 'salvation' but lacking the understanding to offer any practical or emotional support to Mary.[126] Ironically, he appears when Mary is mourning the death of her baby as well as her husband, and Harkness had just informed the reader that '[s]he did not believe in Heaven', making clear that even the illusion of salvation is beyond Mary's reach.[127] Precisely during this period, however, the Salvation Army was in the process of setting up slum posts in Manchester, with one of the first being established in Mary's neighbourhood, Angel Meadow.[128] The image of the Salvation Army as an ineffectual or token presence enhanced the sense that Mary was prevented by her economic circumstances from bearing the responsibility for her child, and left to cope with these conditions alone.

Harkness appears to have been selective in her incorporation of data from her investigation for the 'Life in Lancashire' series in the *British Weekly* so as to enhance the sense of the disempowerment and isolation to which Mary is subject. Like Jos, Mary is an outsider with no support network within her community. Her neighbours agree she '[m]akes herself miserable by herself' and she can count on no sympathy, let alone material aid, from them.[129] The novel, then, did not allow for either of the aspects of worker solidarity — community cohesion or labour solidarity — that were crucial elements in nineteenth-century novels on the Manchester working class, such as Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1854–55). 'Life in Lancashire', however, suggested that Mary's conditions in *A Manchester Shirtmaker* were not

[126] Law, *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, p. 65.
[127] Law, *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, p. 127.
[128] Statistics for 1889–1890 included in *Slum Evangels, Being the Third Report of the Work of the Salvation Army in the Slums* (London: Salvation Army International Headquarters, [1890(?)]), p. 28.
[129] Law, *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, p. 79.

representative of Manchester's slum neighbourhoods. In a brief interview, two female Salvation Army workers who had come from east London to work in Angel Meadow pointed out that 'the slums are just like villages, and the people hold together. One slum scarcely knows another slum, but the people all know their neighbours in their own slum; it is like a big village.'[130] In the novel, this sense of neighbourhood cohesion was brutalized in a style that seems to anticipate *A Child of the Jago*: it showed Mary's neighbours drinking together so that no one remains to take responsibility for their children. It adapted an incident described in 'Life in Lancashire': a child had died, and 'no one knew how it had come to die; for everyone in the house was drunk'.[131] The novel ruefully added a moral judgment by stating: 'So many children are killed by accident!'[132] This death through neglect foreshadowed the very deliberate death of Mary's baby: her decision to kill her child is intended to allow it to escape from the effects of poverty. Harkness described Mary as '"a pauper brat," whose idea had been, that if she could not be happy herself, then her child MUST be, SHOULD be happy'.[133] Images like these served to set Mary's experience apart from that of other impoverished workers in the novel.

Mary's blackleg status is strongly emphasized by this narrative of social isolation. When she sees the subcontractor Joseph Cohen hounded out of a workshop by seamstresses who call him 'Sweater!', Mary 'looked on, puzzled and anxious' and wonders: 'Why did they call the man a sweater; or what had he done to make them all so angry?'[134] When she sees him again,

> [s]he recognized his face in a minute, and the thought occurred to her:—
> 'Perhaps he'll give me a job! The boy said he employs a lot of women.

[130] 'Life in Lancashire. II: The Very Poor of Manchester', *British Weekly*, 17 May 1889, pp. 42–43 (p. 42).
[131] 'Life in Lancashire. II', p. 42.
[132] Law, *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, p. 13.
[133] Law, *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, p. 111, emphasis in original.
[134] Law, *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, pp. 58, 61.

> I've no other chance, and it's better to work for him than to walk about looking for work and finding nothing.'[135]

Mary's inability to resist the possibility of work in spite of her observation of other workers' reaction to the sweater highlighted the pressure of her poverty which precludes any sense of solidarity with other workers.

Despite the title's implied claim that the character of Mary was representative of garment workers in Manchester, however, David Glover suggests that the conditions of sweated needlework represented in the text were no longer accurate by 1890; instead, they constituted an attempt to condense the evils of sweating 'into a single fantasmatic individual': the figure of Cohen, the Jewish sweater.[136] By representing Cohen simultaneously as 'thoroughly alien' and as 'the embodiment of capitalism at its worst', Glover states, Harkness was misrepresenting the realities of sweating in Britain at this historical moment.[137] His evidence draws on Beatrice Potter's contribution to the Lords Select Committee on sweating, the report of which appeared in 1890, stating that Potter showed 'that the "idea of the sub-contractor, the middleman, the alien or the Jew being the 'cause' of sweating" was completely discredited'. Tellingly, he goes on to state that Potter's

> investigations showed that 'either he [the sweater] was a myth, or that the times had been too hard for him, and that he had been squeezed out of existence by some bigger monster', a monster which was 'in fact, the whole nation', insofar as everyone was now enmeshed in the social relations of capital.[138]

This representation of sweating seems to correspond better both to the notion of a sweating 'system' in which the structural undervaluing of women's work meant that they were underpaid and were unable, as a largely decentralized workforce, to combat their underpayment, which went on to undercut the wages of other workers. This global

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[135] Law, *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, p. 70.
[136] David Glover, *Literature, Immigration, and Diaspora in Fin-de-Siècle England: A Cultural History of the 1905 Aliens Act* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 72.
[137] Glover, p. 73.
[138] Glover, p. 74.

economic system was no more caused by individual pantomime villains like Harkness's crude and antisemitic stereotype of the sweater than it was the direct result of consumers' bargain-hunting. The rejection of any attempt to alleviate the protagonist's suffering in *A Manchester Shirtmaker* may have been intended in the same way as Harkness's rejection in *A City Girl* of the possibility of an independent life for Nelly and her child: it enhanced the pathos of the novel at the expense of its realistic and representative function. The portrayal of Mary as absolutely powerless may have been the culmination of Harkness's demands that blackleg workers be incorporated into a variety of discourses of writing about the poor; her suggestion that nothing was done for Mary was an indictment of activism as a response to the excesses of the economic status-quo.

In her interview with the *Evening News* following the publication of *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, Harkness made the unexplained statement: 'I have finished my slum stories; I shall never write another.'[139] Her later fiction writing retained elements of her strategy of using images and anecdotes to reflect economic problems, but her narratives became more personalized. The two serial stories she published in the early 1890s, 'Roses and Crucifix' and 'Connie' (1893–94), described in detail the socio-economic circumstances of their respective female protagonists, the bar worker Lilian and the actress Connie. Both are blackleg workers in the sense that they are dependent on employment that is both economically and sexually exploitative. The stories move away from the economic analysis of their positions as blackleg workers, however: Lilian explores her Catholic faith as she returns to die of tuberculosis in the convent in which she was raised, and Connie becomes the mistress of the scion of a country

[139] 'A Slum-Story Writer'.

family.[140] Their working conditions were primarily illustrative of their personal suffering.

Harkness's retreat in the final phases of her writing career from the literary agenda she had set herself in her early fiction paralleled her gradual detachment from political movements in Britain: her career in the early 1890s was characterized by travel to study labour conditions abroad, and in the mid-1890s she left Britain to settle semi-permanently in Australia. She briefly returned to Britain to publish *George Eastmont, Wanderer* (1905), a semi-autobiographical novel which reflected on the Dockworkers' Strike. The eponymous protagonist has been read as a version of H. H. Champion but also often comes across as an alter ego for Harkness — or John Law — herself; and the novel's visualizations of low-paid workers and the labour movement reflected an economic problem that is perceived by Eastmont as impossible to solve. Eastmont feels the ill effects of his attempts to idealize workers and is finally overcome by 'a contempt verging on disgust for the people he had tried to assist, bred of their pusillanimity and helplessness'.[141] Her next novel, *The Horoscope*, published in Kolkota in 1915, returned to a portrayal of powerlessness, but in a colonial setting. The protagonist, a plantation owner from Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), says to himself about the English colonizers: 'Might is right with the English, I wish we could send them back to their own little Island and govern ourselves'; but this is an idle thought on which he cannot act.[142] The narrative did not cast his lack of agency in socio-economic terms; instead, he cannot escape the death predicted by a horoscope made at his birth, and his preordained doom prevents his ideas of resistance from coming to fruition. In Harkness's final novel, *A Curate's Promise*, published in 1921 but set in 1917, characters do conceive plans for social change based on their experiences of economic problems. The narrative

[140] John Law, 'Roses and Crucifix', *Woman's Herald*, 5 December 1891–27 February 1892, and 'Connie'. *Labour Elector*, June 1893-January 1894.
[141] John Law, *George Eastmont: Wanderer* (London: Burns and Oates, 1905), p. 208.
[142] John Law, *The Horoscope* (Kolkota: Thacker Spink, 1915), p. 251.

follows a young man whose status as a clergyman has prevented him from going to the front in the First World War; in search of a way of making himself useful during the war, he spends three weeks in the autumn of 1917 observing conditions in deprived areas of London under the aegis of the Salvation Army. Like *Captain Lobe*, *A Curate's Promise* used vignettes to depict precarious economic circumstances made worse by the effects of war. Also like *Captain Lobe*, however, it viewed the experience of people in poverty from the perspective of a character who is not part of their community. It visualized similar problems to those addressed in Harkness's earlier London novels, but the protagonist formulates a personal solution that is not related to economic analysis. He determines to devote himself to creating better conditions for working-class soldiers to return to, and decides that the best way for him to work towards this ideal is to join the Salvation Army.[143] The explicit aim of dramatizing the experience of blackleg workers, then, largely disappeared from Harkness's writing project after the 1890s.

Blackleg representation: conclusions

In the 1880s, Harkness created an identity for herself as a blackleg writer that explicitly entailed the recording of blackleg experience; and this was the project she developed in her role as the author-activist John Law. Both the fiction and non-fiction strands of her writing project were intended to visualize and dramatize the poverty conditions that produced blackleg work. Her investigations revealed that reliable data on poverty conditions was elusive, and she resolved this problem by recording examples of the effects of poverty to visualize for her readers how underpayment affected workers. Her fiction developed these examples into stories she presented as reflective of contemporary economic conditions. She offered her representations of blackleg work to

[143] John Law, *A Curate's Promise: A Story of Three Weeks (September 14–October 5, 1917)* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1921), p. 154. For more detail on *A Curate's Promise* as imagining a new social structure, see my chapter 'Lasting Ties: Margaret Harkness, the Salvation Army, and *A Curate's Promise* (1921)', in *Margaret Harkness: Writing Social Engagement, 1880–1921*, ed. by Flore Janssen and Lisa C. Robertson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, forthcoming in 2018).

a broad readership including both professed and potential activists; her novels in particular set out to show that blackleg workers were the victims of economic conditions in which society as a whole was complicit. Her work was addressed both to well-off readers who were reluctant to believe the truth of the conditions she described, and to political activists who failed to incorporate the blackleg worker into their political ideology and practical work. This broad scope meant that her work rarely articulated a coherent activist strategy in response to the conditions she described. As a result, although Harkness abruptly and literally distanced herself from the subject matter and the socio-political environments which had absorbed her from the mid-1880s to the early 1890s, her work continued to lead its own life, as the next chapter of this thesis demonstrates. Her strategy of visualizing conditions that were difficult to record in other ways was used and developed by different activists around the world, with less and less reference to its author and her personal aims and ideas.

Part II.

The Global Blackleg:

Visualizing Working Poverty as a World Problem

Chapter 3.

Blackleg Work across Borders:

Harkness's Representations of Poverty in an International Market

As they developed their own activist literature, both Harkness and Black engaged with narrative strategies emerging internationally for the representation of blackleg work. Blackleg work had an increased relevance in a global context, as many activist projects for the amelioration of poverty conditions were locally orientated and the impact on domestic prices and wages of cheaper goods imported from abroad, including goods produced by colonial labour, tended to be beyond their influence. In a global economy that was creating similar problems in different countries, therefore, an international language of activism was developing to allow activists to formulate responses that took international markets into account. In order to raise awareness of poverty and labour exploitation as international problems, both representative strategies and campaign plans were shared and adapted across borders. While Black reviewed international publications on exploitative working conditions to show their relevance to a British activist readership, Harkness experimented with international literary genres like naturalism to portray the effects of poverty. The translation of fiction and campaign texts was also widely used to show the similarities in the experience of poverty in different countries and to disseminate activist ideas. This chapter considers Harkness's representations of blackleg work in this international context, a topic that has not been previously explored by scholars of her work.

Several contemporary sources attest to the international reputation that Harkness built up with the novels she published between 1887 and 1890, but the subject was most extensively addressed in the 1890 feature article 'Miss M. E. Harkness ("John Law")' in the *Queen*. The magazine stated that Harkness's novels had 'received exceptional attention on the part of Continental writers, and been accorded by them a high place in

contemporary English fiction'. According to the article, this acclaim was due to the fact that Harkness was perceived as providing 'the literary article that is at present in most demand' with European readers, namely 'the realistic picture of the life of to-day'.[1] The phrase 'realistic picture' emphasized the importance of representation and visualization: it indicated that Harkness's novels were valued because they offered a convincing image of poverty conditions and blackleg work. The article stated:

> Our Continental neighbours look upon her books as 'documents' from which to study the conditions of the lowest *couches sociales* [social strata] in England, and they value them highly as such, because they bear the impress of their truthfulness upon them.[2]

This suggests that Harkness's novels were seen as representations of fact rather than as fiction. This sense that her novels were portrayals of real conditions supports the idea that dramatic visualizations of the impact of poverty were deemed an effective way of documenting the problem, and were even given preference over other kinds of data. This chapter explores the role of narrative representation in the consideration of poverty and labour exploitation as international phenomena that offered a means of circumventing the difficulties of translating irregular information on wages and hours across different national contexts. The first section, 'International blacklegs', outlines the problems involved in documenting and scrutinizing the conditions of blackleg work in an international context. The difficulties of determining wages and purchasing power were enhanced by currency conversion and national and regional differences in conditions; this made descriptions of blackleg workers' experience a more reliable indicator of the effects of their poverty, as they were not only more evocative but also easier to compare with readers' own observations. What ideas and reactions these visualizations of blackleg conditions evoked and how they compared to readers' observations and experience could differ significantly, however. The second section,

[1] 'Miss M.E. Harkness ("John Law")', *Queen*, 31 May 1890, p. 767.
[2] 'Miss M.E. Harkness ("John Law")'.

‘The politics of translation’, discusses the importance of translation in international activism and considers how translations of Harkness’s work were used to support a range of activist discourses. The detachment of the narrative voice of John Law from the visualizations of economic conditions in Harkness’s novels meant that their portrayals of blackleg work could be put to a variety of uses: as the practical activist agenda of the novels was not explicitly stated, scope remained for readers to add their own interpretations. How Harkness’s novels were read often depended on the publishing platform and its intended readership. The final section, ‘*A Manchester Shirtmaker* in translation’, offers case studies of two translations of the same novel to show how its call to activism was reshaped and mediated in travel and translation. In this way, the international publication of Harkness’s work made her into a kind of global blackleg, as the product she sold in the literary market could be used to undermine her own activist causes.

International blacklegs: sharing activist discourse

The translation of narratives of blackleg work like Harkness’s appears to have had three functions in the international activist discourse that began to develop around the turn of the twentieth century. Firstly, they might be seen, as the *Queen* suggested, as documents of the social conditions in another country that could help readers understand the economic situation elsewhere. As such, the *Queen* indicated, Harkness’s novels also allowed British readers to ‘see ourselves as others see us’ — that is, to understand the image of social conditions in Britain that was presented to readers in other countries.[3] Secondly, they could give readers a new perspective on the social problems that occurred in their home countries. Judith Johnston suggests that texts that present a ‘foreign domestic backdrop can operate as an excuse to confront the reader with specific

[3] ‘Miss M.E. Harkness (“John Law”)’.

issues of the day relating to the home culture'.[4] In other words, seeing social problems in a foreign context allowed readers to gain a new perspective on domestic structures and problems, either by means of observing customs in other countries, or by considering other observers' views of one's own domestic problems. This strategy has a great deal in common with Black's historical fiction, which also highlighted contemporary problems by exploring them in settings that defamiliarized them for the reader. Thirdly, they could be identified as a representation of problems that existed in the same way in different countries: if the circumstances described were taken to be the same internationally, it mattered less where the representation was situated geographically. In each of these interpretations, the visualization of poverty conditions that novels like Harkness's offered is crucial. As figures and statistics on sweated labour and blackleg work were already difficult to collect and assess locally, interpreting data from different countries was complicated further by geographical, cultural, and economic differences. While figures on wages and purchasing power diverged, images of poverty were more readily transferable across borders, and Harkness's depictions of the conditions that produced blackleg work therefore had an important representative function.

Although the *Queen* did not give evidence for its claim that readers and reviewers abroad accepted Harkness's portrayal of blackleg work in Britain as accurate, it is corroborated by other contemporary sources. In her interview with the *Evening News*, Harkness herself referred to the international reception of her novels as an endorsement; she claimed that *Out of Work* 'has been accepted abroad as a true picture of the condition of the unskilled workmen in England, and it has been reviewed in that sense by most of the Continental journals that treat of such subjects'.[5] Emphasizing the

[4] Judith Johnston, *Victorian Women and the Economies of Travel, Translation and Culture, 1830–1870* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. 55.
[5] 'A Slum-Story Writer', *Evening News and Post*, 17 April 1890, p. 2.

idea that she saw her novels as a conduit for economic realities, she indicated in a letter to *Justice* in 1889 that translators who had applied to her for permission to produce foreign-language editions of *Captain Lobe* 'only care for the book because it purposes to show the real condition of the very poor in London'.[6] Many foreign reviews indeed reflected the idea that the novels were true in a representative sense, and helped readers to understand socio-economic conditions in Britain. In its 1892 review of *Captain Lobe*, for instance, *Russkaia starina* wrote: 'The author, evidently, is well acquainted with the milieu being depicted, and in the pursuit of truth spares neither words nor the readers' nerves.'[7] Other foreign reviews based their belief in the accuracy of Harkness's representations on a sense of recognition of the situations she described. These commentators suggested that Harkness's depictions of poverty and blackleg work in British cities would help readers to understand these problems as they occurred in their own countries. A review in the Swedish-language intellectual periodical *Finsk tidskrift* [Finnish journal] of a Swedish translation of *Out of Work* asserted that '[t]he English author is a talent who deserves to be famous and admired even among us Swedes', because, '[i]f the tone of the novel hadn't been so distinctly English, one could have mistaken it for a Swedish original'.[8] The observation that the novel could have been written in Sweden suggests that similar conditions existed there; and the reviewer appears to have considered Harkness's style of narrativizing and visualizing the problems of unemployment, poverty, and blackleg work to offer useful insights to Swedish readers. The writing might be 'distinctly English', but the review indicated that the representation of blackleg experience and the moral to be deduced from the novel

[6] John Law, 'A Reflection: To the Editor of *Justice*', *Justice*, 20 April 1889, p. 3.
[7] N. V. Vodovozov, 'Kapitan Armii Spaseniia (Captain Lob). Roman Dzhona Lau', *Russkaia starina*, 73 (1892), 840, transl. by Carl Moody.
[8] I. L—d., 'John Law: Utan arbete', *Finsk tidskrift för vitterhet, vetenskap, konst och politik*, 27 (1889), 62 <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=yFwxAQAAMAAJ&q=john+law+utan+arbete&dq=john+law+utan+arbete&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y> [accessed 7 December 2016], transl. by Rebecka Klette. I am grateful to Terry Elkiss for bringing this review to my attention.

were transferable across borders. The images of poverty and blackleg work were considered to transcend their setting as representations of international economic conditions.

Before examining the reception that Harkness's representations of poverty and blackleg work received from activists abroad, and the use that was made of them, it is important to set out the context of international activism into which her work emerged. That the poverty conditions that produced blackleg work were recognizable across borders is reflected in the fact that activists addressing these issues began to share a vocabulary for processes of labour exploitation during this period. With reference to the Parisian garment trade, Lorraine Coons shows that terms such as 'le sweating' and 'le trucking system' were regularly used in French in the second half of the nineteenth century.[9] This usage is reflected in volumes such as *La Lutte contre le Sweating-System: Le Minimum légal de Salaire, l'Exemple de l'Australasie et de l'Angleterre* [The battle against the sweating system: the minimum wage, the example of Australasia and England] (1911) by the legal specialist Paul Boyaval. The title of this text suggests that the term 'le sweating-system' was widely understood by the intended readership; Boyaval also made references to 'le truck-system'.[10] 'Trucking' refers to the payment of wages in kind, rather than in legal tender, a practice that was still common in many forms of exploitative employment, including home industries, around the world. Contemporary commentators in Germany and Switzerland as well as in France refer to the practice of trucking as a 'system'; a Swiss investigator noted in 1909 that the 'Trucksystem' was still found regularly.[11] This common vocabulary reflected

[9] Lorraine Coons, *Women Home Workers in the Parisian Garment Industry, 1860–1915* (New York: Garland, 1987), p. 90.
[10] Paul Boyaval, *La Lutte contre le Sweating-System: Le Minimum légal de Salaire, l'Exemple de l'Australasie et de l'Angleterre* (Paris: Alcan, 1911), pp. 181, 352.
[11] Amsterdam, International Institute of Social History (IISH), Zw1960/356, Jakob Lorenz, *Heimarbeit und Heimbarbeitausstellung in der Schweiz* (Zurich: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Schweiz. Grütlivereins, 1909), p. 15. On the occurrence of trucking in Germany, see, for instance, Wilhelm F. C.

international similarities in conditions of labour exploitation; using the same words to designate comparable problems allowed investigators and activists to communicate across borders. They met to develop campaign strategies and propose policy at international conferences such as the 1908 International Conference of Consumers' Leagues and the 1910 Congrès international du travail à domicile [International conference on home work].[12] This international activist cooperation reflected the idea that, as the nature of labour exploitation as a social and economic problem was identifiably similar in different countries, solutions to the problem could also be shared. For instance, Boyaval's volume made a case for a minimum wage based on 'the example of Australasia and England'. International activist publications about sweating and blackleg work agreed that the same extremes of poverty and practices of exploitation produced the same conditions of misery, stress, squalor, exhaustion, and hunger in different countries: a German pamphlet from 1906 stated unequivocally that 'the great majority of home workers has a miserable existence'.[13] The economic detail of these conditions and proposed solutions, however, proved more elusive and difficult to translate.

The difficulties of assessing incomes and purchasing power in irregular and exploited labour were compounded in nation-wide and international contexts. For instance, there could be significant regional differences in purchasing power, in the extent and type of trucking to which workers were subject, in whether or not workers observed a regular day of rest, or in the frequency and length of 'slack' or 'dead' seasons in which a lack of work meant workers' income decreased or ceased

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Stieda, *Literatur, heutige Zustände und Entstehung der deutschen Hausindustrie* (Leipzig: Dunder & Humblot, 1889), p. 87.

[12] Maud Nathan, a prominent member of the National Consumers' League of the United States, described attending the International Conference of Consumers' Leagues in her retrospective of the NCL, *The Story of an Epoch-Making Movement* (London: Heinemann, 1926), pp. 99–102. Figures presented at the Congrès international du travail à domicile are listed by Boyaval, pp. 60–61.

[13] Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Fd2381/5, 'Die Heimarbeit in der Schneiderei und Konfektion', in *Heimarbeit-Ausstellung Berlin 1906* (Berlin: Vorwärts, 1906), pp. 1–10 (p. 3).

altogether.[14] It was therefore difficult to base generalizations on numerical data. Boyaval's *La Lutte contre le Sweating-System* is one example of how a carefully researched contemporary study compiling the most up-to-date obtainable data on international sweating practices could still undermine its own conclusions due to the unreliability of available figures. In his attempts to deduce average wages in sweated work, Boyaval presented both official data obtained by the Office du Travail in its first study of home work, published in 1911, and information collected by independent researchers; the international data referred to was presented at the 1910 Congrès international du travail à domicile.[15] As the volume attempted to reach these broad conclusions, however, it also pointed out differences in the conditions of workers, proving that their situations were rarely exactly comparable. For instance, Boyaval pointed to the fact that workers in the same industry could earn nearly twice as much in Paris as in provincial districts. He cited the difference in wages in the lingerie industry in Paris and the regions of Cher and Loir-et-Cher. Where Parisian workers might earn up to 400 francs per year, in the provinces this was no more than 200 francs per year on average.[16] As the cost of living is also likely to have varied between Paris and other parts of France, however, details like these could not simply be taken to mean that Parisian workers had double the purchasing power of workers in Loir-et-Cher. Cases like these revealed a need for qualification and context in the use of numerical data that made it difficult to base conclusions on the calculations of wages alone.

Despite his acknowledgment of these differences in the practices and customs associated with home work, however, Boyaval's text, like many contemporary studies of sweated labour, focused on conveying data on wages as a shorthand to illustrate

[14] On the impact of 'slack' or 'dead' seasons and fluctuations in the availability of sweated work, see, for instance, Judith G. Coffin, *The Politics of Women's Work: The Paris Garment Trades 1750–1915* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 164–65, and Andrew August, *Poor Women's Lives: Gender, Work, and Poverty in Late-Victorian London* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999), p. 65.
[15] Boyaval, pp. 59, 60–61.
[16] Boyaval, pp. 59, 60.

conditions in home work. Contextual information, such as cost of living and length of working days, was less clearly stated, either when describing conditions in France, where readers might be able to compare wages with their own, or when providing figures for wages abroad. In spite of the enormous potential fluctuations, Boyaval and his informants settled on an average daily wage of 0.90 to 1.25 francs (F), which the text described as common across different home industries in France.[17] International wages were then compared to this stated daily average wage of French home workers; but rates of pay were converted into francs and compared to the French average without explaining, for instance, possible differences in purchasing power. Boyaval stated that, at 0.75–0.90 F per day, Belgian wages were even lower than French ones; while Dutch wages were comparable to French ones at 1–1.25 F.[18] Without giving precise figures, he went on to say that wages were similar in Germany and Austria; in Switzerland they were slightly higher, although a conference on home work held in Zurich in 1909 still condemned them unanimously as 'wretched'. Italian averages were very low, with workers in Rome earning 0.75–1 F for a working day of ten hours. According to Boyaval, these rates were 'surpassed in horror' only in Spain and Russia; but the averages for these countries were not given.[19] These comparative figures are difficult to evaluate on the basis of other evidence because virtually all contextual information was missed out, and the available information was not standardized; for instance, hourly wages could not simply be scaled up to reach daily, weekly, or yearly averages because of fluctuations in the availability of work, variations in length of working days and weeks, and attempts to deduce average wages based on piecework rates. Even when

[17] Boyaval, p. 59. In 1890, £1 equated to about 25.20 F, so the highest average daily wage of 1.25 was about a shilling in contemporary British currency. All currency conversions are based on the exchange rates given in Hermann Schmidt, *Tate's Modern Cambist* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1890). Exchange rates for French francs are given on p. 46. See also the appendix to this thesis for a table of relevant exchange rates.

[18] Boyaval, p. 60. Belgian francs (FB) were worth slightly less than French francs (FF), the exchange rate being 99.50 FB for 100 FF. Schmidt, p. 46.

[19] Boyaval, p. 61.

converted into the reader's own currency, therefore, numerical data could in fact muddy the waters as exact conversions were unlikely to give an accurate representation of sweating practices in other countries. If readers were encouraged to compare figures to their own income and expenditure, the conversion of poverty wages could well give them erroneous ideas based on incorrect or insufficiently contextualized numerical data. On the other hand, regional and cultural differences could also produce conditions that could be misinterpreted by observers who were unable to contextualize them.

Because of these difficulties of representing conditions that lacked visibility and clarity and were far removed from the personal experience of many potential activists, analyses of blackleg work in different countries often sought a balance between the use of anecdotal and visual examples and figures. Harkness herself encountered this problem during the travel she undertook in 1890 to study labour conditions and activism in Germany and Austria. Reporting to the *Pall Mall Gazette* (*PMG*), sometimes anonymously and sometimes as 'J. L.' (for 'John Law'), she presented her readers with visualizations of the conditions under which she found people working, and the state support available for people with no access to financial stability. Her intention was to offer readers comparisons between poverty conditions and possible solutions in Britain and in other countries. For instance, in her article 'The Viennese Pauper' she related an anecdote about seeing an old man making coffins for destitute people in a London workhouse in order to illustrate her claim that '[t]he way our ancient paupers are punished for the sin of poverty is almost barbarous'. By contrast, she stated that Austria 'set[s] us an example by the way they treat old people who, through no fault of their own, are obliged to seek refuge in the workhouse'.[20] Her description of the care homes into which elderly, disabled, and chronically ill people were placed relied on a combination of numerical representations of cost of living and visualizations of how the

[20] J. L., 'The Viennese Pauper', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 18 September 1890, p. 2.

home appeared to her. Prices of food in the care home refectory were given in British pence and as a result seem very low: she stated that a 'good dinner' including pudding, meat, and a glass of beer or wine 'can be had for 2*d*'.[21] No sense of the residents' incomes was given to contextualize these prices, however. A stronger sense of the institution as benign and considerate derived from descriptions such as: 'The toothless dames trot about, looking happy and contented, chatting with the men, helping with the work of the house, and rejoicing in their grandchildren' who were permitted to visit.[22] Her praise for the institutions was more evocatively conveyed through images like these than through calculations of funding and costs, but also gave a more superficial impression. Her representative strategy relied on giving the readers of the *PMG* a view of an alternative kind of institution in which the residents looked happy and contented in order to suggest that similar conditions could be achieved in Britain. Based on this, she concluded: 'there is much to be learned from the asiles, infirmaries, and other institutions in Vienna. So our economists and philanthropists would do well to visit those places just as our doctors visit the hospitals.'[23] In other words, people who might be able to influence policy on the treatment of the working poor in Britain should follow her example and explore how other countries responded to problems of working poverty.

An article she had published the week before on labour conditions and workhouses in Germany and Austria entitled 'The Loafer in Germany', however, suggests that Harkness's willingness to simplify the representation of social and economic conditions through the use of appealing images was a deliberate strategy to win over her readers. Her analysis of women's working conditions in Vienna showed itself aware of the complexities involved in interpreting labour practices in different

[21] J. L., 'The Viennese Pauper'.
[22] J. L., 'The Viennese Pauper'.
[23] J. L., 'The Viennese Pauper'.

regional and cultural settings. Her description highlighted a number of factors to be taken into account in an exploration of labour conditions, such as the relative value of work and the role of transitory migrant labour. It also brought out a number of the difficulties inherent in reporting on exploitative working conditions, whether in the reporter's home country or abroad. She wrote:

> Viennese women work very hard, harder than their husbands. It is a mistake, however, to imagine that the women who work on the houses as bricklayers' labourers in Vienna, and the sight of whom makes American visitors so angry, are Viennese. Such unskilled female labourers come from Bohemia and other poor countries during the summer months, much as Irish people come to England for the harvest. They earn only 60 or 80 kr. a day for eleven hours' labour, live on rye bread, and sleep in Arbeiter-Hotels, in which they can get a bed for 10 kr. a night. The Viennese women work chiefly in the textile factories, where their average wage is ten shillings a week. They formed their first trade union last month, having at last obtained permission from the police to follow the example of the men. The best speech that was made at the preliminary meeting came from the lips of a Bohemian woman. She pointed out that her sex do the hardest work in Vienna, and get the worst pay for it.[24]

As in her novels, Harkness here relied chiefly on images of work and economic conditions, but these images were subject to different interpretations. Unlike 'The Viennese Pauper', this article referred to Austrian currency without converting it into British pence; Kreuzer (Kr) were the decimal subunit of the Austrian Gulden or florin (Fl), and the exchange rate in 1890 was £1 to 11.75 Fl.[25] Instead of converting the monetary values, Harkness contextualized them with an explanation of the purchasing power of the Bohemian labourers during their stay in Austria that indicated their wages were so low they could not afford to live on anything other than rye bread. It is clear that these workers were in the position of blacklegs, forced to accept low pay and poor conditions in order to find work: Harkness's article pointed out that the workers themselves were aware their work was undervalued. On the other hand, it is also possible that what were clearly poverty wages by Austrian standards gave these workers

[24] J. L., 'The Loafer in Germany', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 September 1890, p. 2.
[25] Schmidt, p. 32. See also the appendix.

a higher purchasing power in their home countries, and that these workers saved money on cheap accommodation and food during their temporary migrant labour in order to bring home as much of their wages as possible. Harkness herself questioned the impression that images of working conditions presented without context could give when she stated that American visitors misinterpreted the sight of female builders in Austria, as they were not aware that this constituted temporary labour. Articles such as these show the conflict between the intention to give an insight into conditions of blackleg work and the difficulties of representing the complexities of different workers' situations and experience.

Examples like Boyaval's statistics and Harkness's visualizations show that the representation of blackleg work was always subject to a degree of mediation, or translation, by the author representing them. Whether the data was presented as figures or as visualizations and anecdotes, the information always required contextualization due to its irregular nature. These problems were increased when the data travelled across borders and further explanations were required in order to allow readers to compare the information presented with their own knowledge or other sources. The influence of the translator of the information and the platform through which it was presented were therefore significant, since they often introduced their own political or ideological influences. This had important consequences for Harkness's own work.

The politics of translation

As a product in the international literary market, Harkness's work became subject to the different agendas of translators, but equally of various publishing platforms. Like the blackleg writers whose work they often translated, many translators themselves worked under conditions of blackleg work in literature. This meant that, while they might have the freedom to choose their own translation work, they also had to secure their own

income by selling their translations to a publisher or periodical and to a specific readership, sometimes regardless of the author's original intent. Harkness's novels thus became a product of international blackleg labour, as selling them in the international market allowed them to be used for purposes that differed from or even undermined her own. On the other hand, translation was also a common and deliberate tactic in international radical politics and activist discourse to ensure that ideas, opinions, activist language, and representative strategies were widely disseminated. This section considers how translators' navigation of a market for and a politics of translation meant that Harkness's visualizations of British urban poverty and blackleg work reached a wide and international readership, but the diverse market available for them affected the purposes to which they were put.

The ways in which translations of Harkness's novels depended on the literary market are reflected in the fact that contemporary references to translations of her work do not always tally with surviving publications. There are frequent examples of announcements of forthcoming translations that may never have materialized, suggesting that blackleg translators may have thought they had identified a potential market for the novels that subsequently proved unreliable. With regard to *Out of Work*, for instance, Harkness told the *Evening News*: 'Two separate editions have been published in Sweden and one in Russia, and permission has been asked to publish editions in France and Germany.'[26] The fact that Harkness or her publisher were notified of the publication of the Russian and Swedish editions suggests that they had also agreed to the novel's translation. Harkness's reference to permission having been asked to produce French and German editions may refer to blackleg translation, where a translator sought permission to undertake the work subject to their finding a publisher, as I have been unable to trace translations in either language published at this time.

[26] 'A Slum-Story Writer'.

Harkness's comments in the *Evening News* and her 1889 letter to *Justice* indicated that translators applied directly to her for permission to translate her novels; rejection by publishers probably explains why not every proposed translation appears to have been published.[27] Correspondence between William Swan Sonnenschein and Harkness indicates that the publisher of the original text did not necessarily have to be involved in negotiations over translation rights. Sonnenschein accepted unequivocally that 'the German right of translation' for *Out of Work* had been purchased directly from Harkness by the translator.[28] This particular translator, Karl Wilhelm Eichhoff, was one with whom she had a prior acquaintance through their shared political affiliations and their mutual connections with the circle around Eleanor Marx and Friedrich Engels. Eichhoff was an associate of Engels and Karl Marx who became the first historian of the International Working Men's Association.[29] Engels's letter to Harkness, drafted in the spring of 1888, described Eichhoff as his 'friend' and also named him as the translator of *A City Girl*. Engels attributed to him the words that 'his translation must be all but literal, as any omission or attempted manipulation could only destroy part of the original's value'.[30] While Eichhoff personally deemed the novels to be important, however, he appears to have had difficulties in selling them in the German literary market. His own correspondence with Sonnenschein indicated that he struggled to find a publisher for the completed translation and obtain adequate remuneration for it.[31]

[27] Law, 'A Reflection'.
[28] Reading, University of Reading Special Collections (UoR), Swan Sonnenschein and Co. Archive, MS 3282, vol. 10, p. 609, William Swan Sonnenschein to Margaret Harkness, 24 July 1888.
[29] Eichhoff's history of the IWMA, entitled *Die Internationale Arbeiterassociation: Ihre Gründung, Organisation, politisch-sociale Thätigkeit und Ausbreitung* [The International Working Men's Association: its foundation, organization, political and social activities, and expansion], appeared in 1868, published in Berlin by Albert Eichhoff, the publishing house belonging to Wilhelm's brother. Eichhoff's acquaintance with Karl Marx extended to his family: he exchanged letters in English with the teenage Eleanor Marx. IISH, Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels Papers, G112, 'William' Eichhoff to Eleanor Marx, 1868. I am grateful to Luke Beesley for making the connection between Karl Wilhelm Eichhoff and the translator referred to in Engels's letter to Harkness.
[30] Friedrich Engels, 'Letter to Margaret Harkness, Beginning of April 1888 (draft)', in *Marx & Engels on Literature and Art*, ed. by Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski (New York: International General, 1974), pp. 115–17 (p. 115).
[31] UoR MS 3282, vol. 12, p. 765, William Swan Sonnenschein to 'William' Eichhoff, 31 May 1889.

Neither of his translations of Harkness's novels ultimately appear to have been published. No German translation of *Out of Work* is recorded until 1899, when 'Joseph Coney' was published as a serial in *Vorwärts*. The identity of the translator, J. Cassierer, is unclear. *Out of Work* did appear in Swedish in 1889 in a translation entitled *Utan arbete* [Without work] by writer and engineer Karl Johan af Geijerstam, brother of the writer Gustaf af Geijerstam. I have found no evidence of Russian or French translations. These examples suggest that translations of Harkness's work either followed from translators' identifications of a potential market resulting in publication, such as in Sweden, or from translators' own interest in the novels, followed by their attempts to find a market. Harkness's own political connections appear to have been instrumental in ensuring the dissemination of her work in German-speaking countries in particular.

Many of Harkness's contacts in the German social-democratic milieu are likely to have been connected with her association with Eleanor Marx, Engels, and their political circle. Besides Eichhoff, this circle included exiles such as Regina Bernstein, the translator of *Captain Lobe*, and her husband Eduard. Eduard Bernstein's high opinion of Harkness and her work was reflected in his autobiography. He described her as

> a highly cultivated lady, the English Socialist who, under the pseudonym of 'John Law,' wrote of the conditions of the seamstresses of Manchester, and the work and character of the Salvation Army in the East End of London, and described similar social conditions and phenomena in the form of fiction.[32]

Bernstein's opinion of Harkness's work here reflected the sense that her novels offered fictionalized examples of the conditions she encountered through her social investigation. Political exiles' awareness of developing political and activist discourses in their home and adopted countries allowed them to forge international links through which they could share information and strategies, and the international dissemination

[32] Eduard Bernstein, *My Years of Exile: Reminiscences of a Socialist*, transl. by Bernard Miall (London: Parsons, 1921), p. 202.

of published work was a crucial part of this. Many of Harkness's contacts retained connections with political publishing platforms abroad: Eduard Bernstein maintained contact with his friend Karl Kautsky who was working in Stuttgart for the radical publisher J. H. W. Dietz as the editor of the socialist periodical *Neue Zeit* [New time]. It is likely that these connections also contributed to create the opportunity for Regina Bernstein to publish 'Kapitän Lobe' in *Vorwärts*.

The combination of blackleg writing and political publication was common in these international socialist circles, as author-activists wrote, translated, and published both to ensure an income for themselves and to gain exposure for their own political ideas and those of their friends and associates. For instance, Eleanor Marx and her partner Edward Aveling worked to translate and publish works of socialist and Marxist theory into English.[33] When Marx and Aveling were short of money and relied for their income primarily on Marx's typing assignments, Bernstein and Kautsky agreed that Marx should be commissioned to translate their edited collection of essays on the history of socialism, *Die Geschichte des Sozialismus in Einzeldarstellungen*, into English.[34] This allowed them to meet a double aim of allowing Marx to earn some money while also disseminating their political ideas to an English-speaking readership. Similarly, Regina Bernstein looked for translation work to support their family in exile in Britain, and Eduard suggested to Kautsky that she could produce a German translation of Irish-born socialist Lloyd Jones's biography of Robert Owen, a founder of the cooperative movement, for Dietz. His intimation that 'Gine is passionately eager to translate something truly socialist' reflects her frustration at using her time and skills

[33] For instance, the letterbooks of Swan Sonnenschein contain correspondence with Eleanor Marx regarding the proofs of her translation of *Ferdinand Lassalle as a Social Reformer* (1893) by Eduard Bernstein, and with Engels regarding Aveling's translation of *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845). Resp. UoR MS 3282, vol. 21, p. 684, William Swan Sonnenschein to Eleanor Marx [as Mrs Aveling], 8 March 1893, and vol. 18, p. 562, William Swan Sonnenschein to Friedrich Engels, 28 October 1891.

[34] Eduard Bernstein to Karl Kautsky, 19 September 1894, in *Eduard Bernsteins Briefwechsel mit Karl Kautsky (1891–1895)*, ed. by Till Schelz-Brandenburg (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2011), pp. 394–402 (pp. 397–98). I am grateful to Ana Parejo Vadillo for discovering this source.

primarily for work unrelated to her political convictions.[35] In their translation work, Bernstein and Marx engaged in the same form of blackleg work in literature as Harkness and Black, as each was obliged through financial necessity to take on work that distracted her from the production and translation of the activist work to which she wished to devote herself. This dependence on the sale of their work explains why translations sometimes compromised the ideas behind the original publications.

The fact that the dissemination of Harkness's work in Germany tended to happen through organs whose political philosophy was close to her own was not merely due to her connections with German socialist exiles in Britain, however. She also had her own contacts in Germany and seems to have been interested in working with socialist and social-democratic activists there from the beginning of her political involvement. She had spent time in Berlin in 1884; a letter to Beatrice Potter from 3 January of that year stated: 'I simply must learn German, if I intend to go on working.'[36] Whether the work referred to was political, literary, or both, remains unclear, but it is evident that, during her stay, she sought out information on German social and political schemes. In her 1890 interview with the *Evening News*, she described being so impressed with the provision of municipal work for long-term unemployed men in Berlin — referred to as *Dienstmänner* [service men] as they were engaged in public service — that she attempted to introduce the scheme in London.[37] Her priorities in her international travel in 1890 indicate that she remained committed to the sharing of political and economic information between Britain and Germany. In June 1890 the *Pall Mall Gazette* reported that 'the talented authoress who writes under the pseudonym "John Law" is going to the Continent to report on the position and prospects of labour

[35] E. Bernstein to Kautsky, 19 November 1891, in *Eduard Bernsteins Briefwechsel mit Karl Kautsky*, ed. by Schelz-Brandenburg, pp. 9–10 (p. 9).
[36] London, London Library of Political and Economic Science, Beatrice Potter correspondence, Passfield/2/1/2/2, Margaret Harkness to Beatrice Potter, 3 January 1884, emphasis in original.
[37] 'A Slum-Story Writer'.

in various European countries, beginning with Germany'.[38] During her stay in Germany and Austria she not only researched working conditions and social provisions, but also interviewed August Bebel and Viktor Adler, leaders in the German and Austrian socialist movements respectively.[39] Around the same time, she appears to have considered undertaking a translation herself that she was likely to have chosen for her own political reasons. She was reported by the *Pall Mall Gazette* in August 1890 to be translating a biography of prominent socialist thinker Ferdinand Lassalle by social democrat and poet Max Kegel from German into English.[40] I have not been able to trace this translation and it seems uncertain that it ever materialized, as Harkness abandoned a number of projects at the end of 1890 due to 'an illness that nearly ended my life'.[41] Harkness's activities in the summer of 1890 give an international context to her strategy of combining blackleg work in literature with a political agenda. She undertook her travels because she had determined that 'I must see more and know more before I can do any further work as a member of the English Labour Party', and she investigated 'how these things are done on the Continent' in the hope that it would help to inform her own political practice.[42] Her reports for the *PMG* secured both an income and a platform for the investigations she carried out for her own benefit. Similarly, her projected translation would allow her to monetize her knowledge both of the German language and of German socialist politics while also creating an opportunity to disseminate knowledge of Lassalle's career and ideas in English-speaking countries. Harkness's strong political ties to Germany, however, do appear to have ensured that

[38] 'Literary Notes, News, and Echoes', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 June 1890, p. 1.
[39] For Harkness's accounts of working conditions and social provisions in Germany and Austria, see J. L., 'The Viennese Pauper' and 'The Loafer in Germany'. Her interviews with Bebel and Adler were published anonymously as 'The Emperor and the Socialists', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 June 1890, p. 1, and 'The Socialist Movement in Austria', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 August 1890, p. 3.
[40] 'Literary Notes, News, and Echoes', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 August 1890, p. 1.
[41] John Law, 'A Year of My Life', *New Review*, 5 October 1891, pp. 375–84 (p. 381).
[42] Law, 'A Year of My Life', pp. 375, 381.

the distribution of her work in German translation was limited to political publications, rather than entering the mainstream German-language literary market.

Although the market for Harkness's work in German-language political periodicals seems to have been a reliable one, this was one environment in which the translations appeared to move beyond her direct influence and control, as content was freely copied and pasted between different periodicals with similar political aims and readerships. Thus, for instance, the translation of *Out of Work* that appeared in *Vorwärts* in 1899 was reprinted in the Vienna-based *Arbeiter-Zeitung* [Workers' paper] in 1901.[43] A translation of *A Manchester Shirtmaker* entitled 'Die Hemdennäherin von Manchester: Erzahling aus der Gegenwart' [The shirt-seamstress of Manchester: a contemporary narrative] was similarly transferred. It had first been published in the *Neue Welt* [New world] in 1893, in a translation by Marie Kunert, a socialist who, in the late nineteenth century, worked as a writer and translator from English and French for a range of German social-democratic periodicals.[44] A translation of the same title ran in the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* [Working women's paper], a Viennese social-democratic periodical aimed at women and girls, from 5 May until 1 December 1893, and it seems likely that this was the same text (Fig. 6). These platforms suggest that German translations of Harkness's novels were strongly bound up with a social-democratic agenda. Her depictions of shared British and German economic conditions were embedded within the wider activist discourse of the periodicals: in *Vorwärts* and in the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* the serials ran along the bottom half of several pages, as though the narratives were presented as illustrations of the news and articles the periodicals also carried.

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[43] Norbert Bachleitner, *Der englische und französische Sozialroman des 19. Jahrhunderts und seine Rezeption in Deutschland* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), p. 576.

[44] Wilhelm H. Schröder, 'Biografie von Marie Kunert', *Sozialdemokratische Parlamentarier in den deutschen Reichs- und Landtagen 1876–1933, BIOSOP-Online* <http://zhsf.gesis.org/ParlamentarierPortal/biosop_db/biosop_db.php?id=111550> [accessed 2 February 2017].

Nr. 9. II. Jahrgang. 1893.

Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung.

Sozialdemokratisches Organ für Frauen und Mädchen.

Freitag den 5. Mai

Der Sieg ist unser.

Schön, großartig, erhebend war Oesterreichs Maifeier. Schon am frühen Morgen, um die Zeit wo sonst alles den Fabriken und Werkstätten zueilt, sah man Arbeiter und Arbeiterinnen, so zwanglos als es ihnen möglich war gekleidet, durch die Straßen ziehen. Der gewohnte Ausdruck von Mühsal, Verdruß, der ihnen sonst anhaftet, fehlte. Stolz, mit begeisterungsblitzenden Augen boten sie ein Bild von Menschen, die sich der Freiheit eines Tages freuten, der nicht gekürzt gemessen, sondern durch Solidarität errungen war.

Und wohl ist es ein erhebendes Gefühl für all' Jene, die immer gekuscht sind, deren Willen zu brechen man immer bestrebt ist, daß das Schwingen der Hungerpeitsche, die Macht der immer mit ihrer Noth Geknebelten zu schanden wurde an der Einigkeit des Proletariats.

Und die Versammlungen! — Man hörte förmlich das Rufen einer anderen, einer besseren Zeit beim Anhören der begeisterungsflammenden Ausführungen der Redner, welche die jubelnden dichtgedrängten Scharen von Männern und Frauen zu stürmischen Zustimmungen hinrissen.

Und welch' Zuhörer waren sie! Alte, grauhaarige Männer neben jugendlichen Mädchen. Die Väter von Greisen neben den jüngsten Proletariern — und sie alle einig Sinnes, alle von dem einen großen Gedanken getragen, zu kämpfen, unaufhörlich zu kämpfen für die schöne hehre Freiheit. Der manchen gut gemeinten Bourgeois, hätte er den Geist unserer Versammlungen gefühlt, dann hätte er das Bewußtsein nicht mehr verscheuchen können, daß das Sternbegleiten des Kapitalismus — in nicht allzulanger Zeit Ruinen werden. Und unsere famosen „Liberalen" mit ihrem „großen" Planer an der Spitze, hätten sie einen Funken von Schamgefühl in sich, wie müßten sie sich verkriechen bei dem stürmischen Fordern des Volkes nach dem allgemeinen Wahlrecht und Achtstundentag. Die Liberalen, die durch ihren Planer dem Volk verkünden, daß es nicht „reif" sei, seine Vertreter zu wählen. Drohend ruft es ihnen den Männern und Frauen in die Ohren, daß das Proletariat reif (!) — so reif, um solche Liberale „nicht lange mehr zu ertragen!"

Und der Jubel der Versammelten, als die Redner der belgischen Genossen gedachten.

Wie trachten da Zweifel auf an der immerwährenden Schuld, der ewigen Hungersnoth des gesitteten Volkes — bei den brausend erhobenen Händen der Männer und Frauen, die nichts, gar nichts zu verlieren haben, aber eine ganze Welt zu gewinnen. Wie wahrlich ist es für Jene, die das Volk hassen, daß es am 1. Mai in allen Versammlungen schallt: „Wir haben gelernt von Belgien!" — Das belgische Proletariat hat sich das Wahlrecht erkämpft durch das Zeigen seiner Gewalt, dadurch, daß es auch nicht scheute, es auf den physischen Kampf ankommen zu lassen, um seinem Willen zur Geltung zu bringen. Und sie haben gesiegt! Aber auch das österreichische Proletariat hat gesiegt am 1. Mai — gesiegt durch die Erringung unserer vierten Maifeier. Und jetzt kann sie uns Niemand mehr rauben.

Ministerial-Erlässe, Statthalterei-Kundmachungen und Fabrikantenbeschlüsse waren wirkungslos, sie prallten ab an dem unerschütterlichen Klassenbewußtsein der österreichischen Arbeiter und

(Nachdruck verboten.)

Die Hemdennäherin von Manchester.

Erzählung aus der Gegenwart.

Von John Law. Autorisirte Uebersetzung von Marie Kunert.

Erstes Kapitel.

Hundert Hemdennäherinnen werden verlangt.

Es war an einem Winterabend in Manchester. Der Schnee fiel in großen Flocken zur Erde und schmolz sofort im Straßenschmutz. Ein dicker gelbgrauer Nebel lag über der Stadt, in dem man weder die Sterne am Himmel, noch den Weg vor den Füßen auf mehr als zehn Schritte Entfernung sehen konnte. In diesem Nebel glichen die Laternen großen, gelben Augen. Eine blasse Laternen warf ihr trübes Licht auf einen Anschlag, der sich gerade unter der Drehtür der London-Road-Station befand.

„Hundert Hemdennäherinnen werden verlangt." Andere Plakate ähnlichen Inhalts waren daneben angeklebt, aber gerade dieses erschien viel auffallender als die übrigen, weil es die ganze Mitte der Mauer einnahm und in großen, rothen Lettern gedruckt war.

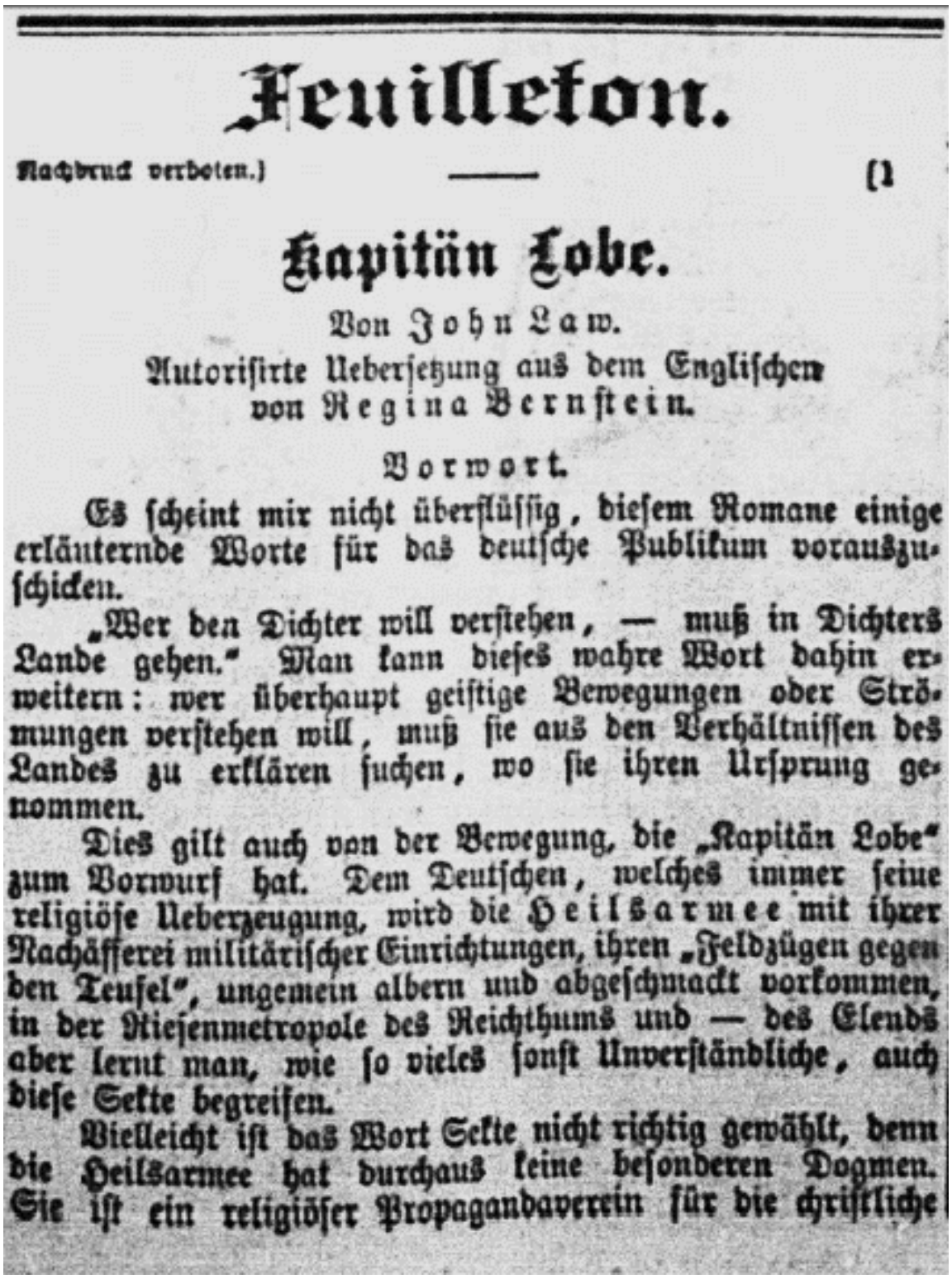
Dem Plakate gegenüber lehnte an einem Laternenpfosten eine Gestalt; in dem Halbdunkel war es unmöglich zu unterscheiden, ob es eine Frau oder ein Kind war. Die Schneeflocken fielen ihr in's Gesicht, aber sie schien dessen nicht zu achten. Sie starrte nur auf die großen, rothen Buchstaben, unbekümmert um den Polizisten, der sie argwöhnisch beobachtete, unbekümmert um die lange Reihe der Frachtwagen und Omnibusse, der Droschken und Equipagen, welche über die Straße jagten, unbekümmert um die Vorübergehenden, von denen sie im Gedränge häufig gestoßen wurde.

Es war an einem Samstag Abend um die siebente Stunde, die Zeit, zu der in Manchester Jeder seine Einkäufe für den Sonntag macht.

Handwerker, Kaufleute und kleine Händler, Alle strömen am letzten Tage der Woche hier zusammen, hilfreiche Händchen auch „die Massen", wie man in Manchester das arme Volk kurzweg bezeichnet.

„Die Massen" tragen Holzschuhe, wenn sie Männer sind, und wollene Tücher um den Kopf geschlungen, wenn sie Frauen sind. Auch unter den Massen gibt's noch wieder soziale Unterschiede. Die Frau, die auf dem Kohlenplatz in Wind und Wetter Holz und Kohlen verkauft, befindet sich etwas Besseres als das alte Mütterchen, das an der Straßenecke mit Streichhölzchen handelt. Der „Gentleman", der mit seinem Wagen durch die Straßen jagt und Apfelsinen anbietet, glaubt, er stände doch noch immer etwa

Figure 6: Front page of the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*, 5 May 1893, showing the first instalment of 'Die Hemdennäherin von Manchester', translated by Marie Kunert. *Austrian Literature Online*.



Feuilleton.

Nachdruck verboten.) (1

Kapitän Lobe.

Von John Law.

Autorisirte Uebersetzung aus dem Englischen von Regina Bernstein.

Vorwort.

Es scheint mir nicht überflüssig, diesem Romane einige erläuternde Worte für das deutsche Publikum vorauszuschicken.

„Wer den Dichter will verstehen, — muß in Dichters Lande gehen." Man kann dieses wahre Wort dahin erweitern: wer überhaupt geistige Bewegungen oder Strömungen verstehen will, muß sie aus den Verhältnissen des Landes zu erklären suchen, wo sie ihren Ursprung genommen.

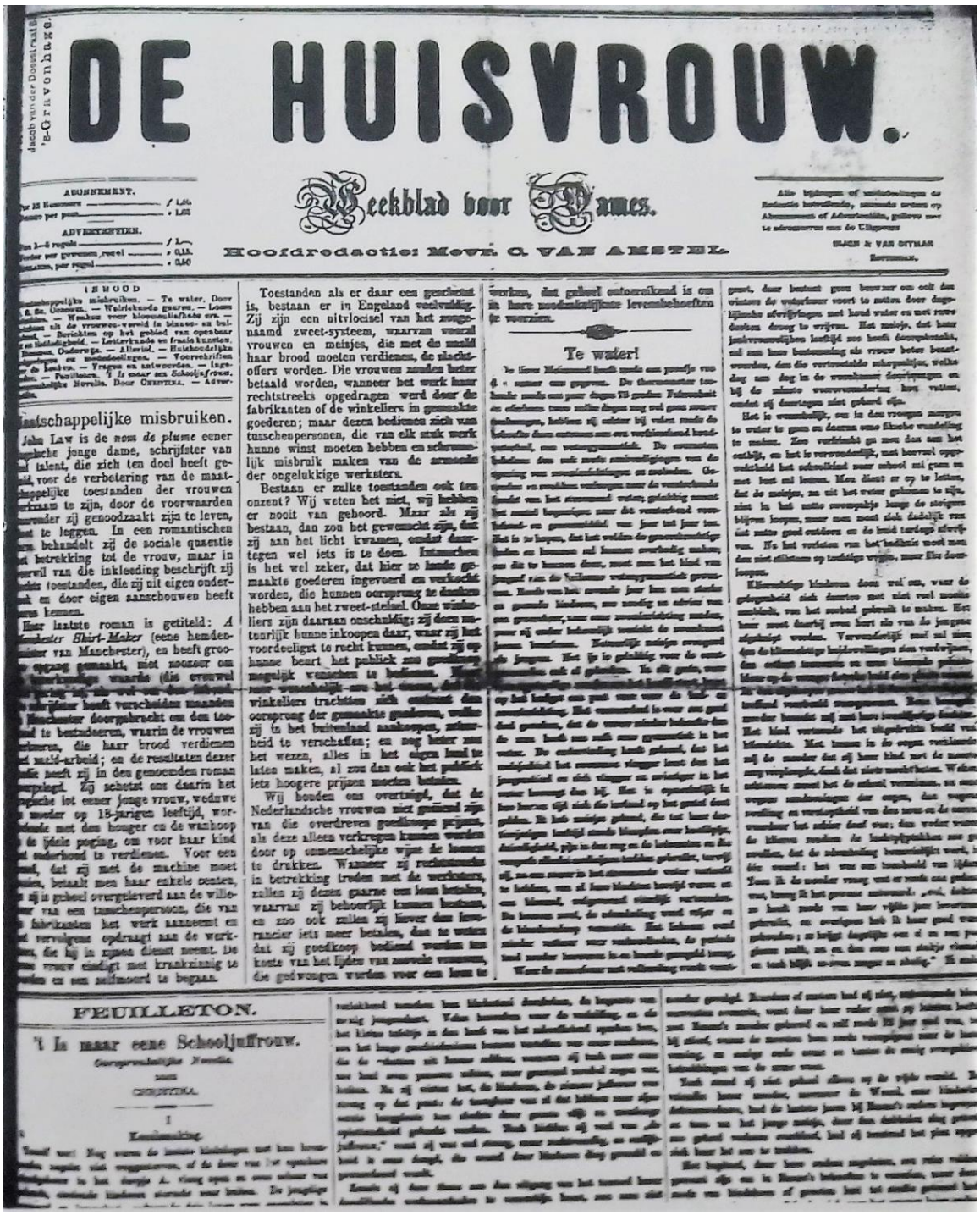
Dies gilt auch von der Bewegung, die „Kapitän Lobe" zum Vorwurf hat. Dem Deutschen, welches immer seine religiöse Ueberzeugung, wird die Heilsarmee mit ihrer Nachäfferei militärischer Einrichtungen, ihren „Feldzügen gegen den Teufel", ungemein albern und abgeschmackt vorkommen, in der Riesenmetropole des Reichthums und — des Elends aber lernt man, wie so vieles sonst Unverständliche, auch diese Sekte begreifen.

Vielleicht ist das Wort Sekte nicht richtig gewählt, denn die Heilsarmee hat durchaus keine besonderen Dogmen. Sie ist ein religiöser Propagandaverein für die christliche

Figure 7: First column of the first instalment of 'Kapitän Lobe', translated by Regina Bernstein, *Vorwärts*, 21 July 1891. British Library, London.

Both Bernstein's and Kunert's translations emphasized the fact that they were associated with Harkness and approved of the representative strategies employed by John Law by suggesting that Harkness had personally authorized the translations. 'Kapitän Lobe' not only billed itself as an 'autorisirte Uebersetzung' ['authorized translation'] (Fig. 7), but frequently emphasized the translator's own knowledge both of John Law and of the conditions described in the text through a translator's preface and explanatory footnotes. 'Die Hemdennäherin von Manchester' is also described as an 'autorisirte Uebersetzung' but gives no further clues as to the translator's relationship or communication with the author; there is no translator's preface (see fig. 6). I have found no references to Kunert in other sources by or describing Harkness, but it is possible that Harkness's other contacts in the German social-democratic movement recommended her work for inclusion in the *Neue Welt*. The *Neue Welt* had been an independent weekly periodical from 1876 to 1888, but it came to focus increasingly on entertainment, and from 1892 it became a weekly cultural supplement to a number of German social-democratic periodicals: it was therefore a suitable platform for narrative representations of economic problems.[45] Cassierer's translation of *Out of Work* made no reference to the author at all beyond the inclusion of her pseudonym. The fact that the text was reprinted in the Vienna-based *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, however, may have been linked to Harkness's personal contacts. The interview with Adler in the *PMG* made repeated reference to visiting him at the offices of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, which he had founded.[46] On the other hand, it was common for Austrian socialist periodicals to copy material from their German counterparts. The sense that John Law and her work were embedded in social-democratic discourse, however, was established.

[45] Christine Heinz, 'Ideal und Institution: Die Familie als Leser und als Motiv der deutschen Familienzeitschriften *Schorers Familienblatt*, *Über Land und Meer* und *Die Neue Welt* zwischen 1870 und 1895' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Hamburg, 2008), pp. 97–98.
[46] 'The Socialist Movement in Austria'.



DE HUISVROUW.

Weekblad door Vrouwen.

Hoofdredactie: Mevr. C. VAN AMSTEL.

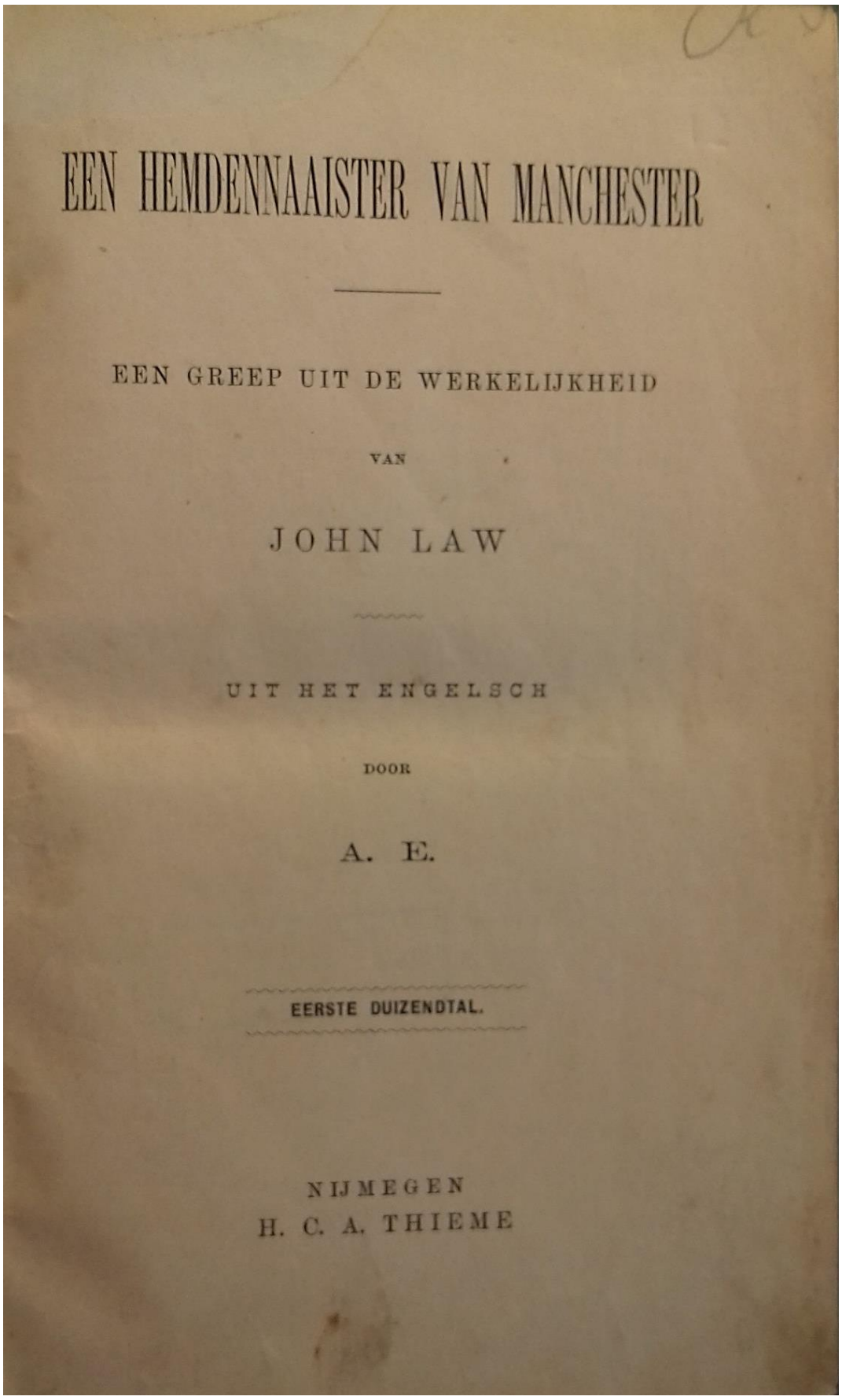
Maatschappelijke misbruiken.

Te water!

FEUILLETON.

't Is maar eene Schooljuffrouw.

Figure 8: Front page of the *Huisvrouw*, 7 June 1890, showing the lead article 'Maatschappelijke misbruiken' [Social abuses]. International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.



EEN HEMDENNAAISTER VAN MANCHESTER

EEN GREEP UIT DE WERKELIJKHEID

VAN

JOHN LAW

UIT HET ENGELSCH

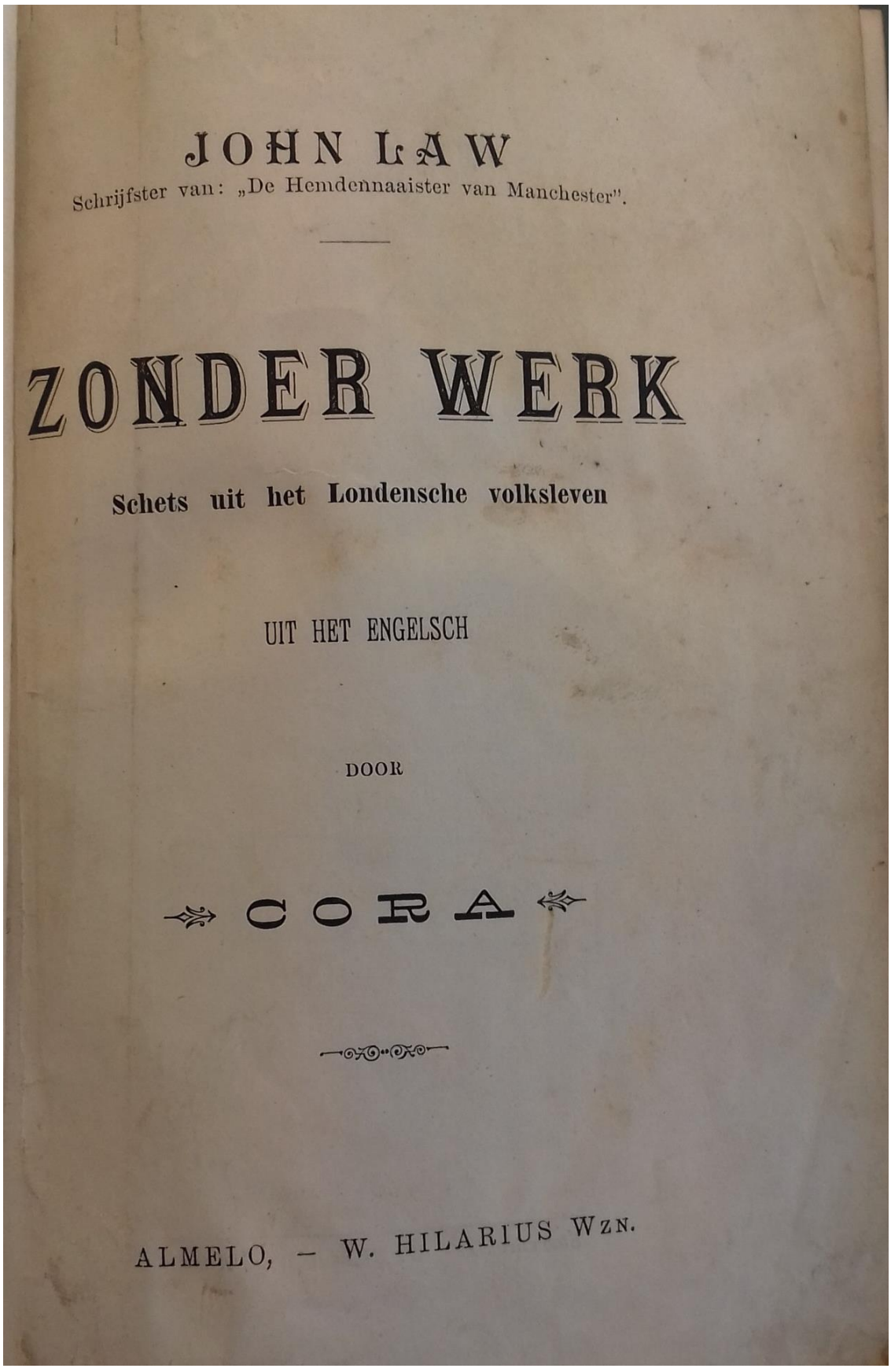
DOOR

A. E.

EERSTE DUIZENDTAL.

NIJMEGEN
H. C. A. THIEME

Figure 9: Title page of *Een Hemdennaaister van Manchester*, translated by A. E. (Nijmegen: Thieme, 1891). International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.


JOHN LAW

Schrijfster van: „De Hemdennaaister van Manchester".

ZONDER WERK

Schets uit het Londensche volksleven

UIT HET ENGELSCH

DOOR

CORA

ALMELO, — W. HILARIUS Wzn.

Figure 10: Title page of *Zonder Werk*, translated by Cora (Almelo: Hilarius, [1891/2(?)]). International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

This explicitly political context was absent from the translations of Harkness's novels that appeared in book form in other countries. Although it is possible that, as in Britain, certain ideological agendas and readerships were associated with the publishers of the translations, reviews of stand-alone translations of her novels in intellectual periodicals such as *Russkaia starina* and the *Finsk tidskrift* recommended them to a wide readership as accurate and informative illustrations of economic conditions. It is unclear whether these translations had any personal connections to Harkness; no translators were named either for the Russian translation of *Captain Lobe* serialized in *Knizhki nedeli* or for an 1888 translation of *A City Girl* mentioned in *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia* [Short literary encyclopaedia].[47] Geijerstam's Swedish translation of *Out of Work* only gave Harkness's pseudonym and did not include any hints from the translator that he knew John Law's identity.[48] Some translations also appear to have been motivated by the attention given to Harkness's work in the mainstream British press: for instance, translations of *A Manchester Shirtmaker* and *Out of Work* into Dutch followed out of an article printed in the *Huisvrouw* [Housewife] in 1890 that discussed the British publication of *A Manchester Shirtmaker* and the social iniquities it described in a lead feature entitled 'Maatschappelijke misbruiken' [Social abuses] (Fig. 8).[49] The article gave some information on John Law and her writing project, but made no mention of Harkness's political agenda or associations. These two translations, produced by different translators for different publishers, carried subtitles reflecting an understanding of the texts as accurate representations of conditions in Britain. The 1891 translation of *A Manchester Shirtmaker* was entitled *Een Hemdennaaister van Manchester: Een Greep uit de Werkelijkheid* [A shirt-seamstress

[47] I. M. Katarskii, 'Harkness, Margaret', *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia* <http://feb-web.ru/feb/kle/kle-abc/ke2/ke2-0681.htm> [accessed 27 May 2015]. I am grateful to Sasha Dovzhyk for discovering this reference, and to Carl Moody for translating it.
[48] John Law, *Utan arbete*, transl. by Karl af Geijerstam (Stockholm: Geber, 1889). I am grateful to Rebecka Klette for examining this text for me.
[49] 'Maatschappelijke misbruiken', *Huisvrouw: Weekblad voor Dames*, 7 June 1890, unpaginated (p. 1).

of Manchester: a sample from reality] (Fig. 9). The translation of *Out of Work*, probably published the following year, was given an explanatory subtitle for the Dutch market and was published as *Zonder Werk: Schets uit het Londensche Volksleven* [Without work: sketch from London common life] (Fig. 10). The later publication of *Zonder Werk* indicates that Harkness's reputation in the Netherlands was based on the positive reception of *A Manchester Shirtmaker*: as figure 10 shows, the novel's title page advertised it as a story by 'John Law Schrijfster van: "De Hemdennaaister van Manchester"' ['Authoress of: "The Shirt-seamstress of Manchester" [*sic*]'].[50] This suggests that the first novel was sufficiently widely read to make a second translation marketable for a different publisher — although the fact that the original publisher did not issue more of Harkness's work may indicate that *Een Hemdennaaister* did not produce a great profit. The two translators remained anonymous, although they were identified as female: the translator's preface in *Een Hemdennaaister* is signed 'De Vertaalster', a female form of 'translator', and the translator of *Out of Work* used the pseudonym 'Cora'.[51] Both were professionally associated with their specific publishers and their work included a range of translations of English-language popular fiction. A. E., the translator of *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, also translated children's stories by Frances Hodgson Burnett.[52] The translator of *Out of Work*, C. Van Berckel-Van Heek, produced a series of translations in different genres from English and French for her publisher Hilarius. Her translations included popular novels by Jessie Mansergh (later Mrs George de Horne Vaizey) and Grace Stebbing. Around the turn of the century, Hilarius became well known as a publisher of didactic children's stories, and Van

[50] John Law, *Zonder Werk: Schets uit het Londensche Volksleven* (Almelo: Hilarius, [1891/2(?)]), unpaginated.
[51] A. E., 'Voorbericht', in John Law, *Een Hemdennaaister van Manchester: Een Greep uit de Werkelijkheid*, transl. by A. E. (Nijmegen: Thieme, 1891), pp. v–ix (p. ix).
[52] 'Boekaankondiging', *Huisvrouw*, 25 October 1890, p. 2.

Berckel-Van Heek accordingly wrote, as well as translated, several children's books.[53] For A. E. and Van Berckel-Van Heek, Harkness's literary work provided a different kind of blackleg labour, as they took commissions from their publishers to translate work with which they had no personal connection. A. E. did produce a translator's preface to *Een Hemdennaaister*, but this placed Harkness's novel in the context of more traditional activist discourses characterized by the quotation, in full, of a translation of 'The Song of the Shirt'.[54] As the next section of this chapter will show, the article in the *Huisvrouw* and the translator's preface divorced Harkness's novel from its political context and claimed it for a different kind of social engagement.

The involvement of these different translators and publishers in the various projects to introduce Harkness's work to international audiences already begins to give some indication of the different aims with which her work was translated. Translators who worked under blackleg conditions themselves pitched her work to a variety of literary markets. The wide range of platforms that showed an interest in Harkness's work around the world suggests that her approach to the difficult subjects of urban poverty and blackleg work generated interest among different readerships. There is a general emphasis on the understanding of her work as providing realistic representations of poverty conditions and blackleg experience. One review of the English-language text of *Captain Lobe* in the *Revue Britannique* did cast some doubt on 'the truth of the details and the exactitude of the sentiments' in the novel, but as the article itself did not make explicit its reasons for doubting the truth of the novel, and the content and tendency of the periodical seem to be drawn largely from the British mainstream press, it is likely that the review was echoing British reviewers' objections to the text.[55] While

[53] A list of known publications with which C. Van Berckel-Van Heek was associated can be found on WorldCat <http://www.worldcat.org/search?q=C.+van+Berckel-van+Heek&qt=results_page> [accessed 23 November 2015]. I am grateful to Johan Janssen for setting me on the trail of 'Cora'.
[54] A. E., in Law, *Een Hemdennaaister*, pp. v–ix.
[55] 'Correspondance de Londres', *Revue Britannique*, 3 (1889), 211–18 (p. 217), *Gallica* <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6471584t.r=%22John%20Law%22> [accessed 23 June 2016].

Harkness's representations were generally accepted as accurate, different translations internationally did suggest different stances on whether the novels offered realistic representations of economic conditions in Britain or whether they reflected broader economic problems, and these implications affect the kind of activism the translations invited. The translations of *A Manchester Shirtmaker* into German and Dutch present valuable case studies of how the same text could be used in different narratives of social responsibility and reader activism.

A Manchester Shirtmaker in translation: activism for women, girls, and ladies

Because of its subject matter, a disempowered young single working mother driven into blackleg work by the pressures of her socio-economic position, *A Manchester Shirtmaker* presented an incarnation of the problem of blackleg work that connected to a range of broader activist discourses including feminism, labour activism, anti-sweating campaigns, and consumer activism. It was therefore a fruitful text for different groups of activists in different countries who could use the images the novel presented as illustrations of their own agendas. The two periodicals associated with the publication of Harkness's work in the Netherlands and Austria shared a specific concern for the social position of women, but the nature of the interest and activism they promoted was very different. While the *Huisvrouw*'s subtitle, 'Een Weekblad voor Dames' [A ladies' weekly], was indicative of a middle-class female readership, the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* was subtitled 'Sozialdemokratisches Organ für Frauen und Mädchen' [Social-democratic organ for women and girls] and deliberately distanced itself from commercial ladies' magazines by operating on a not-for-profit basis.[56] These premises affected the two periodicals' stances on the novel's focus on the sufferings of a female

Compare, for instance, negative reviews of *A City Girl* in the *Woman's World* and *A Manchester Shirtmaker* in the *PMG*. 'Reviews and Notices', in *Woman's World* (London: Cassell, 1890), pp. 556–57, and 'New Books', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 April 1890, p. 3.

[56] Eva Klingenstein, *Die Frau mit Eigenschaften: Literatur und Geschlecht in der Wiener Frauenpresse um 1900* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1997), p. 43.

protagonist, its economic analysis, and the ways in which its readers were encouraged to respond to the iniquities described. The use of narrativized and visualized rather than numerical or statistical representations of poverty and blackleg work was central here, as both translations used stylistic devices to create or collapse a sense of distance between the reader and the subject matter.

Both the *Huisvrouw* and the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* were embedded in international discourses reflected in cut-and-paste journalism and shared content from other, similar periodicals abroad. Both assumed international interest on the part of the reader. Book announcements and reviews in the *Huisvrouw* indicated the popularity of English-language literature, both in the original and in translation; a biographical feature on Jane Welsh Carlyle, for instance, was billed as a loose translation of an English-language original.[57] Alongside the household and kitchen hints implied by its title, the magazine also frequently noted women's achievements in academia, philanthropy, literature, and the arts across Europe and the United States.[58] The *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*, in its turn, appears to have participated in the sharing and copying of news such as strikes and the election of socialist and labour politicians to local and national government that was a common feature across radical political periodicals world-wide, but the news was selected and presented with an emphasis on the role of women, and many of its news items reported on the exploitation of working women. A dedicated rubric, 'Aus Fabrieken und Werkstätten' [From factories and workshops], named and shamed employers for maltreating their female workers.[59] Eva Klingenstein explains that the publication developed from a women-focused supplement to Adler's *Arbeiter-*

[57] Hilda, 'Jane Welsh Carlyle', *Huisvrouw*, 29 November 1890, p. 2.
[58] See, for instance, 'Berichten uit de vrouwen-wereld in binnen- en buitenland', *Huisvrouw*, 5 July 1890, p. 2.
[59] See, for instance, 'Aus Fabrieken und Werkstätten', *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung: Sozialdemokratisches Organ für Frauen und Mädchen*, 20 January 1893, p. 6, *Austrian Literature Online* <http://www.literature.at/viewer.alo?objid=13501&page=1&viewmode=fullscreen&rotate=&scale=2.5> [accessed 22 June 2016].

Zeitung that became an independent periodical in 1892.[60] It often took its cue from German political developments, following key figures from the German social-democratic movement, but it reflected a specific interest in how their views and policies impacted on women: for instance, it reprinted in full a speech given by Bebel in the German Reichstag on the subject of prostitution.[61] For both periodicals, this international orientation and the use of cut-and-paste journalism may explain their interest in Harkness. The article 'Maatschappelijke misbruiken' appeared in the *Huisvrouw* on 7 June 1890, about a week after the *Queen* had run its feature on Harkness, and one may well have prompted the other. The *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*'s adoption of Harkness's serial from the *Neue Welt* forms part of its regular use of content from social-democratic German periodicals.

The two periodicals' focus on *A Manchester Shirtmaker* over Harkness's other novels is not necessarily explained by cut-and-paste journalism alone, however. The article in the *Queen*, if it was a primary source for the *Huisvrouw*, did not place particular emphasis on *A Manchester Shirtmaker* over Harkness's other novels. 'Die Hemdennäherin' appeared in the *Neue Welt* in 1893 and may therefore have been readily available to the editors of the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* to fill the fixed space for a serial, but Bernstein's translation of *Captain Lobe*, from 1891, could also have been a possibility. The fact that both the *Huisvrouw* and the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* were aimed at an exclusively female readership may be a sufficient explanation for their preference for one of Harkness's novels to feature a female protagonist, rather than *Out of Work* or *Captain Lobe*. For the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* the fact that no German translation of *A City Girl* appears to have been available may have made *A Manchester Shirtmaker* the default choice. The Dutch translation of the novel was prompted by the article in the

[60] Klingenstein, p. 44.
[61] 'Rede des Genossen Bebel im deutschen Reichstag über den Entwurf zur Reglung der Prostitution', *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*, 6 January 1893, pp. 4–6, *Austrian Literature Online* <http://www.literature.at/viewer.alo?objid=13500&page=1&viewmode=fullscreen> [accessed 22 June 2016].

Huisvrouw, which focused on *A Manchester Shirtmaker* over Harkness's other novels. It said of the text that 'it has garnered much attention, not because of its literary worth (which nonetheless is not negligible) but because of its subject matter'.[62] As the article suggested, Harkness's public profile was raised around 1890 through reviews of her work and feature articles like those in the *Evening News* and the *Queen* that emphasized the recent publication of *A Manchester Shirtmaker* while her other novel to address the exploitation of women, *A City Girl*, does not seem to have received much attention in the international press. It is possible that this made *A Manchester Shirtmaker* the novel of choice for any readers or translators who had just discovered Harkness. In the context of the social discourses in which both periodicals engaged, however, there may be more ideologically loaded reasons why it was felt that Harkness's depictions of economic conditions would appeal to both periodicals' very different readerships. The *PMG* remarked on what it considered the excessive bleakness of *A Manchester Shirtmaker*; but this very starkness and bleakness would have made the message of the text inescapably clear.[63] In this sense, *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, a tale preoccupied exclusively with Mary Dillon's victimhood, may well have been more adaptable for didactic purposes, and could be applied for the different aims of the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* and the *Huisvrouw*.

The *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* cast the novel in an explicitly gendered political context. According to Klingenstein, the periodical addressed itself both to the 'independent female labourer' and to the 'proletarian housewife' and promised to provide them with opportunities to redress injustice and exploitation.[64] She quotes an article from 1907 that recorded the periodical's stated aim to make women into 'social-

[62] 'Maatschappelijke misbruiken'.
[63] 'New Books', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 April 1890, p. 3.
[64] Klingenstein, p. 44.

democratic warriors'.[65] To this end, the majority of texts printed in the periodical represented 'the sad fate of the proletarian woman in bourgeois society', addressing themes such as gender-based exploitation and disadvantages in the workplace, unwanted pregnancy, poverty, prostitution, and illness.[66] Harkness's novel illustrated these economic conditions with a tale of female victimhood that would fit easily within a project of fostering gender-based class activism. *A Manchester Shirtmaker* introduced a woman who is willing to work but prevented from doing so by an ingrained system, and whose disadvantaged position is underlined by her widowhood and motherhood: she is solely responsible for an infant, but debarred by her socio-economic circumstances from providing for the child. The narrative of *A City Girl* was more complex in this regard, as it represented class exploitation as occurring when Nelly's relationship with Grant disrupts her access to the financial independence she gains from her sweated labour. Nelly's victimhood was also qualified to a degree, as reviewers in periodicals like the *Woman's World* observed to the character's detriment, because she entered into the relationship with Grant of her own accord.[67] Mary was represented as more straightforwardly powerless against interlinking systems of exploitation, and her case may therefore have been considered more likely to inspire exploited women to resistance.

Perhaps because the theme of women's exploitation was so common in the content of the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*, no additional information was supplied to accompany the serial; a lack of explicit context that is underlined by Klingenstein's inclusion of John Law in her list of the male authors whose work was printed in the periodical.[68] By contrast, the anonymous author of 'Maatschappelijke misbruiken' was certainly aware of John Law's female identity. This information could only have been

[65] 'An die Genossen und Genossinnen!', *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*, 16.1 (1907), quoted in Klingenstein, p. 44.
[66] Klingenstein, p. 111.
[67] 'Reviews and Notices', p. 556.
[68] Klingenstein, p. 110.

gleaned from reporting in contemporary British (or, less probably, some American) periodicals, which treated Harkness's real name as an open secret.[69] Bernstein's text showed how a translator could influence the impact of the original text merely by adding footnotes which, in her translation of *Captain Lobe*, increased the focus on the Salvation Army. Both translations of *A Manchester Shirtmaker* included explanatory footnotes, but in Kunert's translation they were predominantly functional, and largely concerned with clarifying monetary values. For the Dutch translation, however, a great deal of additional contextual information was presented, both by the article in the *Huisvrouw* and the translator's preface to *Een Hemdennaaister*. In the context of the different ideological purposes of both periodicals and the position of Harkness's work within them, Harkness's female identity may have been of greater importance to the message of the *Huisvrouw*. While the centrality to the novel of women's suffering is likely to have been crucial for its inclusion in the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*, the feature in the *Huisvrouw* is, in fact, the only contemporary commentary I have come across to see Harkness as concerned chiefly with the social position of women. The article introduced Harkness as a writer who had determined specifically 'to work to improve the social position of women by exposing the conditions under which they are obliged to live'.[70] Although there was a greater focus on women's working conditions in Harkness's published work overall, the novels that she had published by 1890 featured an equal split between male and female protagonists. It may be, of course, that this emphasis was imposed for the sake of convenience by the author of the article, because the novel under discussion was so specifically concerned with women's work. If, in the

[69] American periodicals regularly adopted content from British counterparts during this period, which caused some passages on Harkness to appear in a number of different periodicals across the United States, including both local publications and periodicals with a wider reach. These notices do, however, seem exclusively to have been copied, directly or indirectly, from British sources at this time. See, for instance, 'Daughters of Eve', *Wichita Eagle*, 2 January 1890, p. 2, *Chronicling America* <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85032490/1890-01-02/ed-1/seq-2/#words=Margaret+Harkness&proxtext=Margaret+Harkness> [accessed 2 February 2017].

[70] 'Maatschappelijke misbruiken'.

Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung, Mary's story featured as just another entry in the catalogue of serials reflecting women's suffering under an exploitative economic system, it was logical that its inclusion, or the subject matter it discussed, would require no further explanation or justification, and that it mattered less whether it was written by a woman or a man. In the article in the middle-class, consumer-focused *Huisvrouw* and the subsequent translation of the novel, on the other hand, the gendered identity of the victim and the consumer-reader as determined by perceptions of consumer guilt came into play. Both the article and the translator's preface to the novel presented a self-conscious and even apologetic strategy of awareness-raising, as if on the assumption that its implied readership would be completely unconscious of labour exploitation, and should be introduced to the subject gently. In this context, the fact that the social problem was exposed by a woman, to other women, through the medium of a women's magazine, was relevant to cultivate this sense of connection through gender. This approach was similar to Black's strategies for inviting consumer activism, which gave the impression that she classed herself with her readers as potential activists rather than explicitly playing on her readers' sense of consumer guilt.

While it is likely that readers of the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* were encouraged to sympathize with the blackleg worker Mary as a representative of situations similar to their own, the *Huisvrouw* used the novel's representation of blackleg work to construct an argument closer to a call for consumer activism. In contrast to novels like *A City Girl* and *Out of Work* in which the social and economic forces that drove the protagonists into blackleg work were represented as complex and far-reaching, *A Manchester Shirtmaker* offered a simplification of the economic problem. The idea that Mary's exploitation was caused primarily by the nefarious intent of the sweater worked to invite a similarly simplistic response. If the sweater was the main reason for the exploitation of workers, this person should be eliminated from the transaction. It followed, in the

appeal to the *Huisvrouw*'s readership of middle-class women, that an active role was proposed for the consumer in this effort to eliminate the subcontractor through conscientious shopping, but this narrative of consumer activism was further mediated by an emphasis on geographical distance and supposed differences in the economic systems of Britain and the Netherlands.

While the use of *A Manchester Shirtmaker* to illustrate socio-economic problems in periodicals like the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* and the *Neue Welt* was indicative of an assumption that the same economic situation produced the same conditions of blackleg work in different countries, both 'Maatschappelijke misbruiken' and the translator's preface to *Een Hemdennaaister* reflected an uneasy balance between recognizing sweating as a world problem existing in a global economy and yet refusing to acknowledge that a sweating system existed within the sphere of influence of their readership. This attitude complied with that set out in the *Queen*, in that these texts did not question whether the novel provided an accurate reflection of conditions in Britain, but both denied that similar conditions existed in the Netherlands. This produced a conflict in their interpretation of the workings of the global market. The translator stated that the decision to publish the novel in Dutch, as a result of the interest produced by the article in the *Huisvrouw*, was intended to reveal to the public how much suffering was caused 'as a result of wealth', meaning, in this instance, we may assume, a laissez-faire economy.[71] She acknowledged the impact of global trade and the increased competition which drove wages down to such an extent that similar circumstances could conceivably come into existence in the Netherlands, although she stated that she did not believe that they existed at the time of writing. 'Maatschappelijke misbruiken' claimed that the staff of the *Huisvrouw* had never heard of conditions like those described in *A Manchester Shirtmaker* occurring in the Netherlands, but 'if they did exist, it would be

[71] A. E., in Law, *Een Hemdennaaister*, p. v.

desirable that they be brought to light, because something could be done about them'.[72] The proposed solution in 'Maatschappelijke misbruiken' did show a degree of awareness of the workings of a global market, as the article proceeded to admit that cheap readymade goods imported to the Netherlands were likely to have been produced under sweating conditions.

The idea of bargain-hunting women being responsible for driving down prices and therefore wages in the garment industry was also current in the Netherlands: in her study of women's work around 1900, Selma Leydesdorff cites a didactic rhyme from 1905 that accused women 'always on the hunt for bargains' of paying for low prices with working women's lives.[73] It is likely that the article in the *Huisvrouw* was responding to this idea when it expressed the conviction that 'Dutch women are not desirous of these exaggeratedly low prices if they can only be obtained by reducing wages in an inhuman way'.[74] The obvious implication is that Dutch women would be ready to pay higher prices if these could be directly negotiated with the workers to ensure that they received a living wage. It suggested that the responsibility of Dutch consumers was to make clear to shopkeepers that they did not wish to purchase imported goods produced under sweating conditions abroad. Thus, the economic analysis of these texts accepted a sense of direct consumer influence, but also dissociated itself from this implied responsibility. They accepted the existence of sweating as a practice and spoke out against it; but by placing consumer responsibility in a global context, they distanced themselves from the production process.

The question of the reader's distance from the conditions described is key to the use to which Harkness's representations of blackleg work could be put, as it pointed to different forms of activism. There was little sense of distance between the readers of the

[72] 'Maatschappelijke misbruiken'.
[73] 'Gij steeds op koopjes uit', in political periodical *Strijdkreet*, 11 February 1905, quoted in Selma Leydesdorff, *Verborgen Arbeid, Vergeten Arbeid: Een Verkenning van de Vrouwenarbeid rond Negentienhonderd* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1977), p. vii.
[74] 'Maatschappelijke misbruiken'.

Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung and their perception of the exploitation of working women, and Harkness's illustration of the levels of exploitation to which Mary was subject. Readers of the *Huisvrouw*, on the other hand, were encouraged to feel that the novel relayed conditions in Britain that did not exist in the Netherlands. These different interpretations were fostered by the use of stylistic devices in the translations to make the subject matter nearer or more distant to the implied readership. Translations of Harkness's work relayed the original as literally as possible; but it is relevant to ask to what extent the translator felt a literal translation should emphasize the British setting, thereby creating a sense of foreignness for their readers.

In accordance with the idea put forward in the *Queen* of Harkness's work as 'documents' reflecting British conditions, the situating of the action in its national and local context through the reproduction of place names and, for instance, the titles of newspapers is logical. Both translations of *A Manchester Shirtmaker* under discussion in this chapter adopted Harkness's use of the moniker 'Cottonopolis' which had been attached to Manchester considerably earlier in the nineteenth century, and which Harkness may have used ironically to contrast the idea of the city as a booming producer of cotton with the inability of the protagonist to find work as a seamstress.[75] The Dutch translation gave no explanation of the term, perhaps because the Dutch for cotton [*katoen*] is close enough to the English to make the name intelligible; the German includes a footnote to indicate: 'Kottonopolis gleich Baumwollstadt' ['Kottonopolis [*sic*] as in cotton city'].[76] On the other hand, translations generally did not attempt to echo the traces of local accent or dialect that appeared in the originals, and opportunities for inserting colloquial expressions from the language of the translation were almost universally missed. For instance, rather than choosing an

[75] John Law, *A Manchester Shirtmaker* (London: Authors' Co-operative Publishing Company, 1890), p. 2.
[76] John Law, 'Die Hemdennäherin von Manchester', transl. by Marie Kunert, *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*, 5 May 1893, p. 3, *Austrian Literature Online* <http://www.literature.at/collection.alo?objid=13476> [accessed 22 June 2016].

equivalent Dutch expression, *Een Hemdennaaister* produced a jarringly literal translation of Harkness's original phrase 'six foot fairy' for a police officer, dubbing them 'six-foot tall witches'.[77] This could be construed as another way of making the text foreign, as curious phrases that did not normally occur in the language of the translation were chosen over idioms that might have been more familiar to the reader, and few attempts were made to write the sort of speech readers were likely to have heard working people use in their own country. Particularly in the German translations, however, there were ways in which the material was brought closer to the experience of the readers of the translation. For instance, names of characters might be rendered closer to the German; thus Mary Dillon became Marie or Marien when a child.

This interplay of the familiar and the unknown could be used to create a sense either of distance from or familiarity with the more meaningful social terminology used in the texts as well. Undoubtedly the most relevant word in this context is 'sweater', which was left untranslated, with an explanation given in a footnote, in both the German and Dutch translations of *A Manchester Shirtmaker*. In 'Die Hemdennäherin', the gloss described the sweater's role as both 'middleman' and *Ausschweizer*, a word equivalent to 'sweater'.[78] *Een Hemdennaaister* described the figure as a 'leech, an employer who wears out his workers'.[79] The words chosen by both translators evoked the draining of the workers' physical powers in an almost vampiric way. Despite the availability of such effective words, however, both translators chose to retain the English word throughout the text of the novel. In the Dutch translation, the use of the English word could be seen as functioning to underline the assertion in the *Huisvrouw* and in the translator's preface that no Dutch equivalent of the word or the phenomenon existed; but in the context of the strong awareness of the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* and its readers

[77] Law, *Een Hemdennaaister*, p. 118.
[78] Law, 'Die Hemdennäherin', *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*, 2 June 1893, p. 6.
[79] Law, *Een Hemdennaaister*, p. 31.

of women's exploitation in the labour market, it is unclear why no German-language equivalent was used within the text. After the first use of the word, it was not footnoted again, although it did not recur until two numbers later. English-language terminology was ubiquitous in anti-sweating campaigns internationally, but if this were the explanation, the first footnote also seems unnecessary. On the other hand, the inclusion of the English and German words could also be an indication of the parallels between blackleg working conditions in both countries: if both languages had a word for the phenomenon, this implied a claim to shared experience. This supported the idea that the novel offered a representation of conditions in Britain that also occurred in Germany and Austria.

If the awareness of Mary's exploitation was intended to evoke common experience between the character and the reader, however, this was undermined by the portrayal of the sweater himself. As David Glover notes, the focus on the sweater did not provide an accurate reflection of the conditions of blackleg labour in 1890, making it unlikely that this part of Mary's story would have been particularly recognizable for working women readers.[80] The two translations differed in the extent to which they reproduced Harkness's demonizing characterization of Joseph Cohen. Cohen's portrayal relied on antisemitic stereotypes that served to present him as alien and set him apart from the workers he employs. His speech formed a key part of his depiction as frightening and incomprehensible in his motivations. Harkness wrote of him:

> He had been born and bred in Manchester, and could speak the Lancashire dialect, but he preferred a sort of heathen gibberish, because he thought that it impressed his hearers with a sense of his importance as an employer of labour.[81]

[80] David Glover, *Literature, Immigration, and Diaspora in Fin-de-Siècle England: A Cultural History of the 1905 Aliens Act* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 74.
[81] Law, *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, p. 71.

This ‘gibberish’ was exemplified by his repeated assertion that ‘I give no vork vithout monish’.[82] This portrayal suggested that Cohen could, by speaking the local dialect, appear similar to the workers he employs, but that he deliberately rejects this idea because he wishes to distinguish himself as ‘an employer of labour’. In order to make himself appear different, he chooses a mode of speech that emphasized he is not a part of the community he seeks to exploit. The German translation included this passage, stating that Cohen preferred to express himself in a ‘special jargon’. It stopped short of imitating the character’s pronunciation, however; instead, it bent his grammar with lines like ‘[i]ch will Ihnen geben Arbeit […] aber Sie müssen mir geben Geld’ [‘I want to give you work, but you must give me money’].[83] The Dutch translation did reproduce the antisemitic portrayal of Cohen: it referred to the character as ‘the Jew’, and adopted Harkness’s negative representations of him as possessing ‘greasy hair and […] closely screwed-up eye’.[84] All references to his speech, including his ability to speak the local dialect, however, were left out, and his speech did not differ from that of the other characters.

It is arguable that the Dutch translation, by leaving out the references to Cohen’s speech, in fact removed a layer of complexity from the text. Antisemitic characterization was retained in the descriptions of Cohen’s person and behaviour, so it is unlikely that his ‘gibberish’ was omitted because the translator or the publisher were uncomfortable with Harkness’s portrayal of the character. His speech, however, provided an insight into the way he used racist characterization of himself for business gain. The idea that ‘he thought [his mode of speech] impressed his hearers with a sense of his importance’ is clearly ludicrous; Harkness’s frequent use of irony makes it more likely that she was indicating that the character is aware it makes him intimidating and

[82] Law, *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, p. 72.
[83] Law, ‘Die Hemdennäherin’, *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*, 4 August 1893, p. 2.
[84] Law, *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, p. 76. In Law, *Een Hemdennaaister*, Cohen is described as ‘the Jew’ on p. 62, and the translation refers to ‘his greasy hair and eyes squeezed almost shut’ on p. 66.

difficult to engage with, let alone argue against. Thus, the sweater has internalized an antisemitic stereotype in order to safeguard his economic position — another form of victimization by the cut-throat competitive system in which he operates. The Jewish sweater and his wife for whom Nelly Ambrose works in *A City Girl* are also depicted, although less blatantly, as needing to cultivate a degree of harshness and cruelty and intimidate their workers in order to maintain their position as employers, low down in the economic pecking order as they are. Harkness explained the precarious nature of their socio-economic position as follows:

> The sweater went every morning to a place where trousers were cut out by machinery, and competed with hundreds of other sweaters to do them cheapest; the sweater's wife gave them out to hands at the lowest possible rate of payment, and examined them when they were brought home finished. […] then she haggled about an extra twopence, and ground down hands who could not afford to be independent. She talked about the wickedness of 'the poor,' as though a gulf were fixed between the people who can afford a butcher's bill and those who can only buy meat once a week in a Saturday market. According to her, hands were all bad; they drank, they pawned trousers, they were idle and good-for-nothing.[85]

Although the portrait of the sweater in *A Manchester Shirtmaker* was clumsier and much more dependent on antisemitic stereotypes, this passage from *A City Girl* created an explanatory context for the characters' readiness to internalize attitudes and behaviours that justified their exploitation of others to ensure their own economic survival. By reproducing antisemitic characterization but ignoring the potential complexities in the character of the sweater, *A Manchester Shirtmaker* in its Dutch translation only reflected the pathos of Mary's situation, discouraging the interrogation of socio-economic systems that was at the basis of Harkness's work. This called the representative function of Harkness's novels as illustrations of economic iniquity into doubt and reinforced the idea that Dutch readers were merely called upon to condemn British labour practices and respond with a form of long-distance consumer activism.

[85] John Law, *A City Girl* (London: Authors' Co-operative Publishing Company), pp. 53–54.

The question of narrative and dramatic representations as a means of exploring socio-economic problems was further complicated by the translations' rendering of the monetary values included in the novels. If dramatizations were considered an effective way of representing problems that were difficult to express in numbers, those numbers that did appear presented a tricky choice, as precise conversions of currency could mean the novels did not tally with the sums common in blackleg work in other countries, but inexact conversions were also likely to stand out. Either decision could damage the credibility of the text as a document, particularly if a claim were made to the similarity of economic conditions in the different countries. References to wages, cost of living, and expenditure served a crucial purpose in Harkness's representation of impoverished communities. They gave clues about her characters and were sometimes important to the plot, but also served a comparative purpose. Readers could contrast the sums with their own income and expenditure, or compare the relative values of wages, rent, and prices in impoverished communities based on other sources. Captain Lobe's spending on food reflected the self-denial demanded by the Salvation Army and Lobe's willingness to submit to this. Even to a reader unfamiliar with the market value of sterling, Lobe's economic situation would have been evident from Harkness's explanation that '[t]o live on a pound a week is difficult; but to give half away, and live on ten shillings, is a problem that would have baffled Euclid.'[86] Jos Coney's choice between spending what remains of his money on supper or gin, and his decision that '[t]hree pennyworth of gin would cost less than supper', showed the value of a few pence to the very poor.[87] The contrast between the sixpence offered to Mary as wages by the sweater, the three shillings and sixpence she pays in rent, and the five shillings initially demanded of her as security for the work she takes home illustrated the levels

[86] John Law, *In Darkest London: A New and Popular Edition of* Captain Lobe A Story of the Salvation Army (London: Reeves, 1893), p. 11.
[87] John Law, *Out of Work* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1888), p. 136.

of exploitation to which she is subject.[88] Translations of Harkness's work sometimes gave the monetary values from the original, which may be read as a comparable approach to their situating the novel in its British context by adopting place names, newspaper titles, the names of politicians, etc. This is the case in Bernstein's and Cassierer's translations: Bernstein retained the price of the penny gaff in her translations; and in 'Joseph Coney' Jos was described as down to his 'letzten vier Pence' ['last four pence'].[89] In both translations of *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, however, monetary values were converted. In the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*, mentions of British currency were retained within the text, but footnotes were added giving the equivalent in German Pfennige. This revealed the German origins of the translation, as values were not converted into Austrian Gulden or Kreuzer for the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*. Geijerstam chose the same approach as Kunert in the Swedish translation of *Out of Work*: the equivalent values of a penny and a shilling were given in öre, the centesimal subdivision of the Swedish krona, in footnotes.[90] In *Een Hemdennaaister*, as well as in the Dutch translation of *Out of Work*, monetary values were given in Dutch gulden (*f*) and cent (c) within the text.

In both translations of *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, references to money primarily offered scope for internal comparisons of monetary value. In Kunert's translation, the relative values of British money were established in Mary's exchange with a flower seller in the first chapter. The price of snowdrops was given as sixpence, which was footnoted as the equivalent of fifty Pfennig (0.50 M). Further references to the price of other flowers were not footnoted.[91] This suggests that, while it was important to convey a clear sense of Mary's earnings in contrast to the cost of living, the text was not intended as a detailed investigation into the economic position of Mary and others like

[88] Law, *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, p. 72.
[89] John Law, 'Joseph Coney', transl. by J. Cassierer, *Vorwärts*, 5 September 1899, p. 689.
[90] The two relevant footnotes read: 'A penny is an English coin, which equates to 7.5 Swedish Öre', and '1 shilling = 90 öre'. Law, *Utan arbete*, unpaginated, transl. by Rebecka Klette.
[91] Law, 'Die Hemdennäherin', *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*, 5 May 1893, p. 3.

her. The conversion of monetary values in *Een Hemdennaaister*, however, seems to be in conflict with the assertion in both 'Maatschappelijke misbruiken' and the translator's preface that sweating conditions did not exist in the Netherlands. The detailing of how much Mary earns, and how much she pays for her slum dwelling, need not have been converted but could have been used to preserve a further sense of foreignness, if the Dutch reader were not being invited to compare these sums with their own sense of reasonable prices and wages. In the novel, the sweater promises Mary '30 cents', where the original stipulated their contract as 'sixpence' for a dozen shirts.[92] The conversion is mathematically correct following the exchange rate in 1890 of £1 to 12.05 *f.*[93] This meant that Mary would earn 2½ c per shirt. Comparatively, it was already clear, as her rent was specified in the previous lines as 2.10 *f*, that work at this rate will not pay her bills; but rent figures and wage rates must also have invited comparison with conditions at home. An informed reader in the Netherlands, as well as in Britain and elsewhere, had the means to contrast the information in the text with social investigations into working-class household budgets, the conditions of and remuneration for women's labour, and the profits made on slum rents. These figures suggest that, compared to available data from the Netherlands, Mary's pay is startlingly low, while her rent is significantly higher than average. Leydesdorff notes that a piecework rate of 4 c per shirt — paid to seamstresses in Nijmegen, where Thieme, the publisher of *Een Hemdennaaister*, was based — was reported with shock in the Dutch press in 1898.[94] During an 1886 parliamentary inquiry into low-paid labour, one seamstress employed in a workshop testified to being paid an hourly rate of 15 c, with no extra pay for overtime; while these conditions were better than those common in home work, they were still

[92] Law, *Een Hemdennaaister*, p. 63, and Law, *A Manchester Shirtmaker*, p. 72.
[93] Schmidt, p. 65. See also the appendix.
[94] Leydesdorff, p. 46.

sufficiently dire for inclusion in the inquiry.[95] Contemporary household budgets suggested that in a large city like The Hague, rent figures for one- or two-room dwellings were likely to be between 1.25 *f* and 1.75 *f*.[96] It is unclear, then, whether the reader was supposed to be shocked at conditions which, based purely on currency conversion, were even worse than those in the Netherlands, or whether the assumption that readers would not know about comparable conditions in the Netherlands is genuine. In this way, the translators' decisions about monetary conversions highlight the difficulties of translating the details of poverty conditions when a great degree of variation was possible in the numerical reflections of labour practices that produced comparable images of suffering and stress. In the translations considered here, monetary values seem to become a part of the dramatic visualizations of poverty, as they ensured a shock factor, but did not constitute reliable numerical data.

Harkness's visualizations of blackleg work lent themselves to a range of interpretations and activist discourses. As her novels focused on presenting images of poverty, the ideological context and the possibility of conceiving solutions to the problems portrayed were left to the reader, and could be mediated by the publishing platform and other contextual information. The choices made by the translator, even if they concerned only apparently small details in an otherwise faithful rendition of the original, could have a significant impact on the way the text came across to the reader. If emphasizing the foreign setting or converting monetary values could influence the sense of the text's distance or nearness for a foreign reader, it followed that this sense of distance would also affect the reader's understanding of the urgency of the problem, and their own ability and responsibility to attempt to combat it. While the dissemination of

[95] 'Verhoor van Henriette Van de Putten, Huisvrouw van G. J. Welter', in *Een Kwaad Leven: Heruitgave van de 'Enquête betreffende werking en uitbereiding der wet van 19 September 1874 (Staatsblad No. 130) en naar den toestand van fabrieken en werkplaatsen' (Sneek, 1887)*, 3 vols (Nijmegen: LINK, 1981), I: *Amsterdam*, 370–72 (p. 371).

[96] Rent rates included in family budgets cited in Auke van der Woud, *Koninkrijk Vol Sloppen: Achterbuurten en Vuil in de Negentiende Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Bakker, 2010), p. 66.

Harkness's novels constituted a broadening of her awareness-raising project, it still functioned as a product of blackleg labour in a market that could reshape and repurpose her novels to serve ends different from her own.

Translation and adaptation: conclusions

While neither of the translations discussed in this chapter's case study were instigated by Harkness herself in the way that Eichhoff's translations of *A City Girl* and *Out of Work* were, they both targeted readerships that Harkness was also interested in reaching in English. The readership of the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* corresponded roughly to what Gerd Bjørhovde called the 'enlightened working-class reader' who was probably also the target audience of the shilling editions of Harkness's novels that she herself was instrumental in issuing.[97] The middle-class readership of the *Huisvrouw*, on the other hand, were the sort of readers Harkness hoped to 'keep […] awake for a week' with the subjects she depicted in her work.[98] Both periodicals recognized the conditions described in Harkness's novel about Manchester as world problems brought about by the workings of a global economy, and therefore as relevant to an international readership. In the *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*, the novel was presented as an illustration of exploitative conditions that would be recognizable to Austrian readers. The *Huisvrouw* was less willing to accept the idea that these conditions existed in the Netherlands, but did acknowledge that goods produced by sweated labour abroad could be offered for sale to its Dutch readers. Neither publishing platform seemed inclined to question the realism of Harkness's text. Instead, they presented her visualizations of blackleg work as informative for their readers, and implied that they could influence these conditions through participating in different forms of activism.

[97] Gerd Bjørhovde, *Rebellious Structures: Women Writers and the Crisis of the Novel 1880–1900* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1987), p. 82.
[98] 'A Slum-Story Writer'.

Although they developed Harkness's strategy of raising awareness of blackleg work by visualizing conditions that were otherwise difficult to quantify, and disseminated her representations internationally, the translations discussed in this chapter do highlight the difficulties of internationalizing depictions of poverty. Harkness's portrayals of poverty were localized by language, customs, and monetary values; and while her representations of the strain associated with extreme economic pressures could be transferred across borders, the details of the situations she described could not. Her representations thus ran a risk of losing credibility in translation. In this sense, the dangers and responsibilities involved in selling or buying representative strategies in the international market could be almost as great as in buying consumer goods produced beyond the scope of the consumer's scrutiny, as activist literature, its premises, and its consequences could and often did drift far from the intentions behind the original, and could end by introducing social problems of its own. As the difficulties of representing conditions common to different countries became more evident, activists sought to develop new strategies for visualizing the effects of poverty.

Chapter 4.

Blackleg Workers on Display:

Black, Consumer Activism, and the Visualization of Blackleg Work

The reader as consumer was a key target of the growing international activist discourse on labour exploitation around the turn of the twentieth century. This thesis has shown how Black and Harkness, as blackleg writers who relied on selling their work, discovered that the consumers of their publications could also be addressed as consumers of the products of sweated labour. Many of their representations of blackleg work in the production of consumer goods set out to reveal to the purchasers of these goods their complicity in exploitative labour practices, and to encourage them to reject these systems of production. As campaign texts were also offered to readers as a kind of consumer product, however, representative strategies were crucial in engaging the consumer-reader. As the concern around sweated home work in particular gained popular attention around the turn of the twentieth century, a variety of representative strategies were explored by different activists to expose these exploitative conditions to consumers.

Both Black and Harkness identified the appeal of visualization as a strategy to motivate consumers to activism. In 1888, around the same time that she was identifying the impact of using images and anecdotes rather than statistical data in her investigative journalism, Harkness wrote to the *Labour Elector*, a monthly socialist publication edited by H. H. Champion, to pitch a new representative strategy that would not merely relate but actually show the conditions of blackleg work. Her proposal was for an exhibition of goods produced by sweated home workers. Although she published her idea in a socialist periodical and expressed the hope that the Labour Party would support it, it

was clear that the exhibition's intended audience were the consumers of the products of sweated labour. She explained:

> It has been thought that if people could see with their own eyes specimens of home industries, sympathy might perhaps be aroused for the workers. Few people care to visit the homes of these women, for the doors of their rooms are guarded by fevers and vermin. But those who have collected the specimens can tell […] the devil's own tale about home industries, having full knowledge.[1]

Like Black's and Harkness's campaign writing, the exhibition was intended to visualize work that was made invisible because the workers were confined to their homes as workplaces and often lacked access to political representation. Since consumers would not seek out information on these workers' conditions themselves because they were uninterested or afraid to approach them, this visualizing strategy would bring the information to the public in an accessible form. The idea of approaching the consumer with information that they could not or would not seek out for themselves became increasingly important as awareness grew of the complexity of the processes of production and distribution of consumer goods in a global market. As a result, exhibitions of sweated labour became a widespread international phenomenon during the first decade of the twentieth century, staged by different activist groups across Europe and the United States. Although Harkness's original proposal appears to have come to nothing, Black and the Women's Industrial Council were instrumental in organizing a 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' in London in 1906 as part of this international trend.

For Black, the exhibition marked a culmination of twenty years of experimentation with consumer activism. This chapter traces the development of Black's ideas regarding the kind of activism that consumers could initiate and sustain, and explores the representative strategies she used in the development of her schemes to

[1] Margaret E. Harkness, 'To the Editor of the *Labour Elector*', *Labour Elector*, October 1888, p. 8. I am grateful to Lisa C. Robertson for bringing this article to my attention.

involve consumers in activist campaigns. Her conception of the role of the consumer in economic processes reflected an awareness of blackleg work as an international problem, but her proposed solutions initially tended to be localized. She shifted the focus of her campaigns from individual to collective action as she became increasingly concerned about the complexities of fragmented production processes and resolved that legal change on a national scale was the only viable solution. This entailed a change in her representation both of the workings of the market for consumer goods and of the influence consumers could wield within it. She adjusted her appeal to consumers accordingly: where she had initially attempted to explain market processes and describe the conditions of sweated labour for her readers, the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' embraced a kind of performance activism that displayed the sweated workers to the potential consumer activist in person. The consumer as exhibition visitor was no longer required to seek out sweated workers in rooms 'guarded by fevers and vermin'; but the exhibition's strategy to persuade the public into collective activism required participating workers to display themselves for public consumption.

The first section of this chapter, 'Bridging distance', explores the importance of representation in the international discourses around consumer activism in which Black participated. Examining Black's international reputation as a labour activist, it considers the ways in which these activist discourses acknowledged blackleg work to be an international problem but could only offer localized solutions. As an example, it interrogates Black's proposal for a consumers' league in the late 1880s, which drew inspiration from international campaigns but formulated a response based on a simplified perception of market relations. Although the proposal gained traction internationally, Black herself abandoned the idea as too limited to respond adequately to the complexities of the market. Instead, she went on to support the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' as a clearer reflection of the fragmentation of production processes. The

second section, ‘Exhibiting blackleg work’, examines the ways in which exhibitions of sweated labour sought to reflect these complex production processes and the working practices they produced. It considers how Black used these representative possibilities to reveal how the expansive nature of the market rendered consumers’ leagues unsuccessful, allowing her to argue for her campaign for a minimum wage. The final section, ‘Visualization and representation’, evaluates the ‘Sweated Industries Exhibition’ as a representative strategy and argues that the display of real workers had different implications from the more generalized scope of fictionalized representations. Exhibiting these workers as representative of labour practices worked to deprive them of individuality in a way that undermined Black’s own overarching project of representing working women. Although the ‘Sweated Industries Exhibition’ aspired to be the most effective way possible of showing consumers the realities of blackleg work, its project of representing the work rather than the workers could in fact function to introduce distance between the spectators and the workers on display.

Bridging distance

The international discourse of consumer activism relied on overcoming consumers’ feelings of detachment from the processes that produced the goods they bought. This meant that consumers had to be informed about the labour practices involved, but also that they should be made to feel that they could exert influence over these processes. The use of international examples to show how consumers could act to change labour exploitation was an important part of this strategy, as activists aimed to demonstrate that their campaign proposals were viable because they had been attempted successfully in other countries with similar economic systems and social problems. Black participated in these mutual international exchanges of campaign strategies, as she both adopted and adapted campaign ideas from abroad, and saw her own work presented as an example of

successful activist practice in other countries. While activist strategies were considered to be internationally inspiring, however, the campaigns developed from them tended to remain locally focused. Black's own initial experiment with consumer activism, the proposal for a consumers' league she published in the late 1880s, drew on ideas developed abroad, but was only able to formulate practical action based on the situation in London. She went on to alter her representation both of the workings of the market and of the influence consumers could exert within it. This section explores the mutual international exchanges of campaign strategies related to raising awareness of sweating to motivate consumers to activism. It situates Black's proposal for a consumers' league within these discourses and considers how international consumer activism balanced global influences with local concerns and projects.

Strategies for visualizing the hidden iniquities of sweated work had developed in tandem with the development of the narrative of consumer guilt, as Beth Harris shows with reference to the figure of the sweated needlewoman. She explains that reformers reacted against the appeal of cheap and attractive garments as it obscured the conditions under which they were produced. As she states:

> The job of the reformer, it was claimed, was […] to uncover, especially for the female consumer, what could not be seen beneath the gilded façade of the show shop. […] if they [consumers] could see through the gilding of the show-shop then the life of the seamstress would be improved.[2]

Lawrence B. Glickman demonstrates that the resistance against consumer alienation from production processes became even more important as awareness grew of the complexities of the global market. As the provenance of consumer goods became more difficult to trace, it became more, not less, important that consumers remained aware of the far-reaching impact their purchases might have. Glickman notes that consumer

[2] Beth Harris, 'All that Glitters is not Gold: the Show-Shop and the Victorian Seamstress', in *Famine and Fashion: Needlewomen in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Beth Harris (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 115–37 (p. 129).

organizations developed a rhetoric of 'long-distance solidarity' between producers and consumers: in other words, the fact that goods might have been produced at a great distance from the consumer in geographical terms did not mean that consumers should feel morally or emotionally distanced from the workers.[3] He describes how

> [c]onsumer activists, in effect, proposed a new physics of time and space, highlighting the real-time effects of consumption and suggesting that in an increasingly global market economy, the moral impact of one's actions was not determined by physical propinquity but by the market-based effects of one's economic actions.[4]

As it became clearer that a global market involved complex processes of production and distribution, the role of consumer activists became more important as it was less simple for consumers to buy locally and, if they purchased goods produced in the international market, to discover for themselves the provenance of those goods.

In this context, consumer activists began to share the results of their investigations internationally, to draw parallels between conditions in different countries, and to adopt campaign strategies and solutions that had proved successful elsewhere. Black regularly referred to the work of international investigators and activists in her own publications, and before examining her proposals for consumer activism in detail it is important to situate her activist work and its influences within the context of the international exchange of campaign strategies. To illustrate the similarities in wages and conditions in different countries, *Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage* compared Britain to Germany and the United States and included data gathered in Australia.[5] It also mentioned foreign researchers into sweated work, such as 'acute French observer' Albert Aftalion and his book *Le Développement de la fabrique et le travail à domicile dans les industries de l'habillement* [The development of the

[3] Lawrence B. Glickman, *Buying Power: A History of Consumer Activism in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 6.
[4] Glickman, p. 7.
[5] Clementina Black, *Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage* (London: Duckworth, 1907), pp. 143, v.

factory and home work in the garment industries] (1906).[6] Her argument for a minimum wage drew on groundwork laid by other 'careful enquirers' including 'Father Ryan, Professor of ethics and economics in the St Paul Seminary, Minnesota' in his book *A Living Wage: Its Ethical and Economic Aspect* (1906).[7] *Makers of our Clothes*, the 1909 investigative text Black co-edited with Adele Meyer, included an appendix entitled 'Home-workers in Germany' that compared their own investigative strategy with that used by a researcher from Breslau. This researcher had deliberately sought contact with the WIC in London in order to share details of their working methods and the results of their investigations. Black and Meyer pointed out that '[t]he fact that the women visited [in Breslau] belong to an organisation has made it possible to obtain very full details — much fuller than is possible when unorganised women are visited by strangers'.[8] This suggested that they saw the strategy used in Breslau as a successful example that could be used to improve their own practices of organization and investigation. Black's interest in international activist strategies and victories was also carried forward into the work of the WIC. Representatives of the Council, as well as its organ the *Women's Industrial News*, kept a close eye on campaign developments abroad and frequently lent authority to their proposed schemes by referring to the success of comparable initiatives abroad. For instance, in 1904 the WIC used the platform of the *British Medical Journal* to propose the adoption in Britain of the German *Kinderorte* nurseries [literally: children's places] scheme to offer care for children who, 'owing to poverty or family circumstances', could not be adequately cared for at home. This proposal used a scheme that had proved successful abroad to suggest that problems caused by economic circumstances in Britain could be solved by training the children of blackleg workers to

[6] Black, *Sweated Industry*, p. 2.
[7] Black, *Sweated Industry*, p. 149.
[8] Mrs Carl [Adele] Meyer and Clementina Black, 'Appendix A: Home-Workers in Germany', in *Makers of our Clothes: A Case for Trade Boards* (London: Duckworth, 1909), pp. 195–207 (p. 195).

become ‘more productive and less burdensome’ members of society.[9] These mutual exchanges of information show that researchers and activists felt that knowledge of conditions abroad would help them to understand the situation in their own country, and that the example of international campaign strategies allowed them to improve their own. In this sense, they bridged geographical as well as emotional distance; they identified social problems that were shared across borders; and by embracing successful strategies implemented in other countries to combat these problems they sought to show both other activists and policy makers in their own country that solutions could be found.

Black’s own work, in its turn, was used by activists abroad who cited her campaigns and publications as insights into sweating practices in Britain and internationally and drew inspiration from her campaign initiatives. Her role as a blackleg writer seems to have been important in bringing her campaign work to the attention of consumers internationally as well as in Britain. Where Harkness’s international reputation was strongly linked to her authorial identity, Black appears to have been best known abroad for her social activism, although it appears that, as in Britain, her work as a writer of fiction helped to draw attention to her activist work as well. In the United States, cut-and-paste journalism from British periodicals seems to have aided the development of Black’s literary and political reputation.[10] Liselotte Glage states that ‘many […] of her writings […] came out in America’, and US editions were issued of *An Agitator* by Harper and of *The Pursuit of Camilla* by Lippincott and were reviewed in US periodicals.[11] Although interest in her political work seems to

[9] Alice R. Joseph, ‘School Children Out of School’, *British Medical Journal*, 23 January 1904, p. 220.
[10] For instance, the *Indianapolis Journal* reprinted Black’s short story ‘The Professor’s Piano’ from the *English Illustrated Magazine* in 1890. Clementina Black, ‘The Professor’s Piano’, *Indianapolis Journal*, 2 March 1890, p. 11, *Chronicling America* <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015679/1890-03-02/ed-1/seq-11/> [accessed 28 February 2017].
[11] Liselotte Glage, *Clementina Black: A Study in Social History and Literature* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1981), p. 45. Review of *An Agitator*: ‘Current Fiction’, *New-York Daily Tribune*, 13 January 1895, p. 20 <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1895-01-13/ed-1/seq-20/>. Reviews of *The Pursuit*

have followed the establishment of her reputation as a novelist, it was her activist work that received the more favourable coverage in the US press. Her work to establish women's trade unions was reported in the New York City-based *Sun* as early as 1890; the Women's Trade Union Association is described as 'something after the plan of the Working Woman's Society of that kind here, only in London it is prominent women, in co-operation with the working women, who inaugurate the strikes and reforms'.[12] The *Sun* here was explicitly using Black's work as a point of comparison with strategies used by women's labour activists in the United States.

It is likely that Black's publications on sweated work expanded international interest in her activities as a social reformer in the early twentieth century, as her strategies for research and representation supplied useful material for researchers aiming to raise awareness of sweating in their own countries. From the first years of the twentieth century until the First World War, Black's name was cited as an authority in French- and Spanish-language periodicals on subjects including women's work, the position of workers in London, the minimum wage campaign, and women's suffrage; the suggestion was that activists in France and Spain could learn from Black's projects. In France, as in the US, Black's activism was given prominence over her fiction, but her career as a writer was also recognized. In 1923 *Le Temps* printed a joint obituary for three women writers based in Britain: Black, Alice Meynell, and Katherine Mansfield. Although she was given a place among these influential writers, however, Black was described as a 'novelist turned militant trade unionist', a phrase that gave a nod to her

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of Camilla: '"The Pursuit of Camilla"', *San Francisco Call*, 20 May 1900, p. 4 <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1900-05-20/ed-1/seq-4/>, and 'Fiction', *New-York Tribune*, 17 June 1900, p. 11 <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1900-06-17/ed-1/seq-39/>. All three reviews sourced from *Chronicling America* [accessed 28 February 2017].

[12] 'Girls' Clubs in London', *Sun*, 9 November 1890, p. 29, *Chronicling America* <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030272/1890-11-09/ed-1/seq-29/> [accessed 28 February 2017].

writing career but primarily emphasized her activism.[13] The rather over-simplified summary of Black's career implied that she gave up her novel-writing in order to concentrate on trade union activity, thus failing to acknowledge both her move away from trade unionism and her professional status as a blackleg writer who used the skills as well as the income from her publications to support her activism. The article described *Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage*, which it incorrectly called 'le *Sweating system*', as more 'piquant' than all her novels.[14] This use of the term *piquant* [fiery or stinging] indicated that the text was considered both emotionally poignant and socially novel and shocking.[15] Notices of her activist work in contemporary publications corroborate the sense that her work was widely received with interest and respect. In 1902, a notice of the publication during that year of *The Case for the Factory Acts*, a collection edited by Beatrice Potter Webb to which Black contributed, was included in *La Justice*, the socio-political periodical founded and directed by Georges Clemenceau, now best known as the prime minister of France during the final years of the First World War.[16] Désiré Pasquet cited both *Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage* and *Makers of our Clothes* in his 1914 text *Londres et les ouvriers de Londres* [London and the workers of London].[17] Black's speech on child labour at the 1906 National Conference on Sweating and the Minimum Wage, held at the Guildhall in London, was referred to in Paul Boyaval's *La Lutte contre le Sweating-System* (1911).[18] Her contribution to the annual Conference of Women Workers held in Manchester in 1911 was noted in the Spanish monthly *Revista Católica de Cuestiones Sociales* [Catholic

[13] René Puaux, 'Silhouttes anglaises: Trois Disparues', *Le Temps*, 24 March 1923, p. 2, *Gallica* <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k2450526.item> [accessed 14 July 2016].
[14] Puaux, p. 2.
[15] I am grateful to Kit Yee Wong, Leah Sidi, Annie Cloutier, and Jessica Lynch for helping me to explore the meanings and implications of this usage of *piquant*.
[16] 'Etranger', *La Justice*, 18 June 1902, p. 3, *Gallica* <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k8261939/item> [accessed 14 July 2016].
[17] Désiré Pasquet, *Londres et les ouvriers de Londres* (Paris: Colin, 1914), p. 734, *Gallica* <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k10251849> [accessed 14 July 2016].
[18] Paul Boyaval, *La Lutte contre le Sweating-System: Le Minimum légal de Salaire, l'Exemple de l'Australasie et de l'Angleterre*, (Paris: Alcan, 1911), p. 386.

review of social questions], a social periodical on a Catholic basis that was deeply concerned with the position of low-paid workers.[19] Black's international reputation made hers an important voice in the development of practices of investigating, representing, and combating exploitative labour practices, and her publications were adopted as informative and inspiring by activists in other countries. The scheme for a consumers' league that she pioneered in the 1880s in fact proved to be more influential abroad than in Britain. Activists in the United States adapted it and successfully exported their model to other countries, showing how local and individual activism could be transferred to different national and cultural contexts.

Black's first experiment with consumer activism combined her global and local awareness of exploitative labour practices, as it drew on international influences in the formulation of its strategy, but relied for concrete data primarily on London-based investigations carried out by the WPPL. Her representative strategy evoked a sense of proximity between herself, the consumers of her work and of consumer goods, and the sweated workers who produced these goods. This worked on two levels: she compared her readers' experience to the conditions of sweated workers — as, for instance, in 'The Morality of Buying in the Cheapest Market' (1890) — and she classed herself with her readers by presenting herself as another concerned consumer. By addressing her readers as if discussing a shared concern, she credited them with an interest in the subject. In 'Something about Needlewomen' (1888), she reinforced this implication by noting the popularity of other representations of sweated needlework, such as Walter Besant's portrayal of the seamstress Melenda in *Children of Gibeon* (1886). She wrote: 'Mr. Besant's was most emphatically a song in season. Melenda was precisely the sort of

[19] 'Uniòn [*sic*] Nacional Inglesa de "Woman Workers"', *Revista Católica de Cuestiones Sociales*, July 1911, p. 83, *Hermeroteca Digital, Biblioteca Nacional de España* <http://hemerotecadigital.bne.es/issue.vm?id=0002658664> [accessed 23 June 2016]. I am grateful to Ana Parejo Vadillo for discovering this reference.

person about whom a great many of us had been wanting to learn something.'[20] This assumption that the consumers' interest and concern was already extant but thwarted by the obscuring influence of market processes played on the consumer's conscience in two ways. On the one hand, it excused the reader's possible lack of activism previously; but on the other it also implied that the enlightened consumer had a duty to participate in projects to ameliorate the conditions about which they had now learnt. She simultaneously increased the pressure on her consumer-readers to participate in activism and facilitated their participation by proposing a channel for consumer activism in the form of a consumers' league. While she clearly set out to bridge the distance between the consumer and the invisible worker, however, Black only represented the conditions she had herself encountered in Britain, and as such her representation of the production processes she addressed remained localized and did not address the existence of an international market.

Black first put her proposal for a consumers' league to a reading public in 1887 when she published an article entitled 'Caveat Emptor' [Let the buyer beware] in *Longman's Magazine*. The phrase is defined in detail as 'let the purchaser examine the article he [*sic*] is buying before the bargain is completed, so that in case of disappointment after purchase he may not blame the seller'.[21] Black, however, redefined the phrase, in a sense that referred clearly to the narrative of consumer guilt that held the buyer paying a low price for a product directly responsible for the wages paid to the worker who produced it. Black was asking the buyer to beware, not of the quality of the product, but of the potential harmful consequences attached to their act of purchase. This relied on outlining the workings of the market economy for her consumer-readers.

[20] Clementina Black, 'Something about Needlewomen', in *Woman's World*, ed. by Oscar Wilde (London: Cassell, 1888), pp. 300–04 (p. 300).

[21] 'caveat, n.' *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, September 2016) <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/Entry/29259?redirectedFrom=caveat+emptor#eid9893814> [accessed 18 September 2016].

Black's argument rested on the involvement of the consumer as a participant in market processes, showing their connection to the producers of the goods they bought. Recognizing the fact that market processes made the worker less and less visible to the consumer was an important part of this strategy. She acknowledged the immediate appeal for individual consumers of only conducting transactions on a local and personal scale. This solution was intended

> to eliminate the middleman and deal with the worker direct; to get our carpentering done by a man who works for himself, our clothes made by a sewing-woman whom we pay ourselves, and then fixing in our own mind a standard of cost according to which these people could live comfortably by working not more than eight hours a day, pay them at that rate without regard to the market price.[22]

She proceeded to point out, however, that 'we cannot always, in our complicated ways of life, deal at first hand. Some things can only be got at shops, and most things are (to own the truth) got there better.'[23] If virtually all consumers were thus obliged to make some purchases in a wider economic system, she asked her readers to acknowledge that this meant that 'there are three parties to most trading transactions — namely, the worker, the employer, and the consumer — and […] we who are consumers do in most instances help to make work bad and workers underpaid'.[24] This consumer influence, she explained, derived from 'the inexorable economic law about cheap buying' or 'the inevitable consequences if we buy in the cheapest market', namely:

> *Where buyers give the lowest price they can, employers will try to produce at the lowest price they can, and the wages of the worker will tend to the lowest point at which it is possible for him* [*sic*] *to live*.[25]

This representation of the relationship between prices and wages represented the consumer as holding a position of economic power, while the worker was subject to the decisions of the consumer and the employer, both of whom responded to the market. Black repositioned the moral influence in this equation, however. She contrasted the

[22] Clementina Black, 'Caveat Emptor', *Longman's Magazine*, August 1887, pp. 409–20 (p. 414).
[23] Black, 'Caveat Emptor', p. 415.
[24] Black, 'Caveat Emptor', p. 409.
[25] Black, 'Caveat Emptor', p. 411, emphasis in original.

negative tendency of prices and wages as an inevitable consequence of consumer passivity and worker disempowerment with the possibility of a positive tendency as the result of active consumer involvement. In this way, she refigured the accusation that consumers exercised a passively harmful influence through their bargain-hunting as a proposal that consumers could do active good through responsible and ethical consumption. Black's idea for a consumers' league suggested ways for consumers to support both their own and workers' empowerment through activist projects to change the market status-quo.

As she developed her ideas in 'Caveat Emptor', Black's emphasis was on the practical application of the scheme, designating roles for consumers, trade unions, and workers. By way of example, she pointed to one initiative by the Knights of Labor in the United States, who used their organ, *John Swinton's Paper*, to publish a blacklist of 'employers who paid badly, had unsanitary workshops, or oppressed their employees'. She noted that this model would have to be adapted for use in Britain, as 'proceedings for libel would probably follow' if the practice of blacklisting were copied; her proposed adjustment was a system of white listing, providing details of good employers and encouraging consumers to shop at these firms instead.[26] She then proceeded to give examples of white lists of shirt-makers, upholsterers, dressmakers, and milliners. The lists had been collated by the Women's Protective and Provident League based on information provided by trade union representatives. This approach allowed for a positive as well as a practical use of representative methods: instead of exposing poor working conditions, the white lists worked as advertisements for ethically-run workshops, as well as for the investigative methods of the WPPL. This proposal for positive cooperation between unions, employers, and consumers was designed to

[26] Black, 'Caveat Emptor', p. 415.

counteract the alienation of each of these groups from the others. Emphasizing the possibility of mutual respect and collapsing the barriers of class, Black stated:

> The employer after all is not one of a race of malevolent man-eating ogres; he is one of ourselves; he would rather, if he were not to lose by it, make his employees happy than miserable. But a single employer cannot permanently raise the rate of wages any more than the single consumer can.[27]

In this way, her proposal refigured the understanding of the blackleg identity as undermining worker organization: the harm different participants in transactions did to one another was involuntary, but it was possible for individuals to work together towards the amelioration of the position of each. Her closing paragraph, however, firmly directed responsibility back to the consumer, as she indicated that her proposal required the broad support of consumers to develop into a successful scheme. She wrote:

> With more time and wider means of inquiry, these lists might doubtless be much increased. To keep them as nearly as possible complete and to see that they were republished at frequent intervals would be one part of the business of a Consumers' League […]. But can there and shall there be a Consumers' League? That is a question to be considered by the consumers themselves, that is to say by all of us.[28]

This conclusion built on the assumption of the consumer-reader's interest, and on the implication that an enlightened consumer would wish to take action to improve working conditions, by laying down a challenge to the consumer to act on the information in the article.

'Caveat Emptor' highlighted the connections between the local and the international in the evolving discourse around consumer activism. Black's use of the example of the Knights of Labor from the United States points to an international exchange of representative strategies, based on shared economic problems. The proposed solution, however, was thoroughly local: all of the firms that appeared on

[27] Black, 'Caveat Emptor', p. 416.
[28] Black, 'Caveat Emptor', p. 420.

Black's white lists were based in London, where the WPPL was able to carry out its own research. Her closing paragraph did suggest that consumers could expand the project independently by adding to the existing white lists, but this cast the consumer in a far more advanced role than merely that of an ethical shopper, as it required the consumers' league itself to take on the investigative work of the WPPL. Black's initial proposal, then, was not extensive enough to gain large-scale influence. It failed to account for the complexity of systems of production that outsourced many elements of the production process. This outsourcing increased the risks of the involvement of blackleg work by underpaid and exploited workers at other stages in the production process before the materials reached the WPPL-approved workshop, or after the final products left it. As her campaign work increasingly came to acknowledge the complexities of the market, Black herself abandoned the consumers' league scheme for what she considered to be more effective strategies; but other activists internationally took it up and adapted it for their own purposes.

The strategies that Black used to win readers over to consumer activism informed the continued popularity of the idea of a consumers' league. As Landon R. Y. Storrs states, proactive consumer activism 'offered moral regeneration and economic empowerment to the non-wage-earning woman, whom social critics […] were condemning as an economic parasite and fueler of "conspicuous consumption"'.[29] In other words, it inverted the narrative of consumer guilt in order to give middle-class women access to positive influence without challenging their class identity. It also provided an immediate channel for the activist impulses of concerned readers who wished to act on their discoveries regarding labour exploitation. As such, it proved adaptable for the purposes of a range of different organizations. Ian Mitchell shows that the project, though under a different descriptor, was taken up by the Christian Social

[29] Landon R. Y. Storrs, *Civilizing Capitalism: The National Consumers' League, Women's Activism, and Labor Standards in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), p. 19.

Union (CSU) in Britain in the 1890s, which produced white lists of dressmakers and bakers in London.[30] A more prominent and long-lived incarnation of the movement was begun in the United States around the same time as Black's original proposals. Maud Nathan, a leading member of the Consumers' League of New York (CLNY) and later of the National Consumers' League (NCL) of the United States, acknowledged the movement's debt to a British initiative, if not to Black directly, noting that the 'ideas and principles of the Consumers' League originally came to us from England'. She went on to emphasize, however, that the US leagues radically reformed the British scheme: while 'the League languished in the country which had given it birth', it went from strength to strength in the United States around the turn of the twentieth century.[31] Storrs explains that this was due to the NCL's reinvention of itself from a society of ethical consumers to an effective pressure group. Initially, the US leagues used tactics comparable to those proposed by Black, such as white listing, but, as Storrs states,

> the NCL recognized that the strategy of using public pressure to elicit voluntary compliance by employers had serious limitations. The reformers concluded that employers would have to be coerced, rather than persuaded, into fair labor practices.[32]

In order to exert this kind of influence, the CLNY and later the NCL focused on lobbying for legislative change to protect both the positions of workers and the quality of consumer goods. Its first legislative triumph was the 1896 Mercantile Act in Albany, intended to improve and safeguard the working conditions of retail workers. The act was hailed by Nathan as

> mark[ing] an era for the Consumers' League. Before that, our work had been formative, in a sense, experimental. We had succeeded in arousing the public conscience as to the existence of certain evils and the sense of responsibility for these evils. We had created a public opinion which finally crystallized in legislation. We were no longer a doubtful

[30] Ian Mitchell, 'Ethical Shopping in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain', *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*, 7.3 (2015), 310–29 (p. 318) <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHRM-08-2014-0021>.
[31] Maud Nathan, *The Story of an Epoch-Making Movement* (London: Heinemann, 1926), p. 89.
[32] Storrs, p. 2.

> experiment; we were a force and a power, and we had to be reckoned with.[33]

Nathan points out, with pride, that British labour activists including Black used the success of the Mercantile Act to have a similar bill passed by the House of Lords in 1899 to combat the exploitation of shop assistants.[34] The practice of lobbying for changes to labour laws, then, had an international impact as activist organizations in different countries drew inspiration from the success of other bodies around the world. Local activist victories thus prompted international projects for social change.

The model of consumer participation and investigation culminating in legislation begun with the Albany Mercantile Act was adopted successfully in other states and by the National Consumers' League, and went on to be taken up in several European countries. In the early years of the twentieth century, consumers' leagues were established in France, Switzerland, and Germany.[35] In 1908 an International Conference of Consumers' Leagues could be held in Geneva.[36] While the NCL went on to have a significant impact on the development of labour legislation in the United States and remains active today, however, many of these international initiatives appear to have been relatively short-lived: Mitchell states that, of the consumers' leagues established in the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, and Belgium in the early years of the twentieth century, 'only the Swiss league survived the First World War'.[37] Black was aware of the success of the consumers' league scheme in the US; in one of her contributions to the handbook to the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' of 1906, she pointed out that '[i]n New York, where the Consumers' League is supported by ladies of wealth and influence, it has been more successful; and the movement is now being copied, with some

[33] Nathan, p. 59
[34] Nathan, pp. 89–90.
[35] Nathan, pp. 93–94, 97–98, 98.
[36] Nathan, pp. 99–100.
[37] Mitchell, p. 315.

enthusiasm apparently, in France'.[38] While, like the NCL, Black turned her energies towards legislative change in the early twentieth century, however, she no longer found the consumers' league model fit for purpose. It is important to note that the US model differed considerably from that proposed initially by Black, in that it did not involve the worker participation Black had envisaged. Unlike the NCL, she did not see consumer activism as a single solution to problems of underpayment, but rather as one of several strands of an activist project to improve blackleg working conditions. As Matthew Hilton puts it in *Consumerism in Twentieth-Century Britain* (2003), her proposal for a consumers' league 'was seen as a support to existing labour concerns'. Her approach of white listing, drawing on both the demands and the expertise of trade union activists and researchers, illustrates the fact that she

> recognised that 'such a league of consumers would never be strong enough entirely to remedy the poverty of the worker', but she believed it to be the first step towards a 'natural alliance' between consumers and trade unionists.[39]

Black's focus was on the conditions of underpayment that created blackleg working conditions, and she felt that these could only be combated with the participation of trade unionists.

The temporary success of consumers' leagues internationally, and the longevity of the NCL in the United States, suggest that the representative strategies that underpinned the movement exercised popular appeal. They allowed consumers to act on their sense of guilt and outrage by inverting the negative influences of their power as purchasers. The reinvention of the consumers' league as a legislative pressure group allowed consumers to expand their influence beyond the local and limited pressures they could exert through ethical shopping. The strategy of offering consumers access to

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[38] Clementina Black, 'Suggested Remedies', in *Handbook of the 'Daily News' Sweated Industries Exhibition*, compiled by Richard Mudie-Smith (London: Burt, 1906), pp. 22–26 (p. 26) <https://archive.org/stream/handbookofdailyn00mudi_0#page/n6/mode/1up> [accessed 24 July 2016].
[39] Matthew Hilton, *Consumerism in Twentieth-Century Britain: The Search for a Historical Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 47.

an activist identity thus proved successful; but Black herself gradually began to doubt her own assertion that 'consumers, when once the information is put before them, can, *if they care enough about it*, raise the wages of the workers above starvation point' by redirecting their patronage to ethically run workshops.[40] By the time she became involved in the organization of the 1906 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' she was willing to distance herself from the consumers' league scheme as publicly as she had first endorsed it. Her change of mind was motivated by the continued development of her own economic theories and her growing awareness of the global market. Instead of asking consumers to attempt to influence an increasingly complicated system of production, she resolved that the only way of raising wages and ensuring their stability at a living wage level was the implementation of a legal minimum wage. She maintained that the support of consumers was necessary to enforce change, and that this support could be obtained by making them aware of the conditions of sweated labour; but she had altered her view that the consumer's power lay in their acts of purchase, and adapted her representations of market relations accordingly.

Exhibiting blackleg work

Black's engagement with the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' connected the discourses of consumer activism, the representation of blackleg conditions, and the campaign for a minimum wage. The very public event presented a new strategy to visualize the conditions of sweated work and to motivate consumers to activism, a context that Black used to show why she no longer felt a consumers' league to be an adequate response to the conditions displayed. The exhibition provided an opportunity to highlight the complexities of the market in which sweated workers were employed, and Black used this to underpin her argument that implementing a legal minimum wage was the only

[40] Black, 'Caveat Emptor', p. 416, emphasis in original.

secure way to combat the underpayment that produced blackleg work and sweating conditions. While the visualizing strategy of an exhibition allowed for the complexities of documenting exploitation to be sidestepped, however, this same visual appeal introduced a sense of exhibitionism. Making the conditions of exploited labour accessible to economically comfortable spectators in this way may thus also be seen as transferring the experience of slumming to the environment of the West End exhibition space.

The first exhibition of sweated labour in Britain, the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition', took place in May and June 1906 in the Queen's Hall in London. Spearheaded by the Women's Industrial Council and sponsored by the *Daily News*, a liberal paper owned by the Quakers and chocolate manufacturers George and Edward Cadbury, the exhibition brought together a range of activists with different agendas and profiles. It was researched, planned, and organized by a council of leading names in labour, political, and anti-sweating activism. The formidable list of fifty-eight names in the exhibition handbook includes, besides Black, numerous members of the WIC, such as Amie Hicks and Gertrude M. Tuckwell, trade unionists and labour politicians such as Herbert Burrows and James Keir Hardie, active socialists Harry Quelch, Robert Blatchford, and C. F. G. Masterman, and socially engaged writers George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells.[41] The organizing council represented a broad coalition of reformers who are likely to have had different motivations for their interest in combating sweating practices, but a significant proportion came from more or less radical political traditions. The exhibition itself was dissociated from radical politics, however: the venue was a prominent concert hall in the City of Westminster, and the event was opened by one of Queen Victoria's daughters, Beatrice, and her daughter

[41] *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, p. 4.

Victoria Eugénie, who was shortly afterwards to marry King Alfonso XIII of Spain.[42] The royal patronage, and the shilling charged for admission, indicate that the exhibition was intended to attract a socially and economically influential audience. The handbook, which contained details of conditions in the exhibited trades and of the exhibition's programme of lectures illustrated '[b]y means of an… Oxy-Hydrogen Lantern', cost a further sixpence.[43] The *Daily News* eagerly emphasized the success of this formula of attracting a wealthy audience to alert it to sweating conditions. It described the opening of the exhibition as 'w[earing] much the aspect of a Society crush', and went on to state:

> It has often been asserted by social reformers that, after all the columns and volumes that have been written about sweating, a knowledge of the evil must be universal. No observer at Queen's Hall yesterday could continue to share that illusion. Society came, saw, and shuddered; and in the expressions of sympathy and indignation that fell from those gentle-nurtured folk, one saw — it is surely not too optimistic to surmise — a corrective public opinion in the making.[44]

This description suggests that the exhibition not only targeted, but managed to reach a different audience from that at which the voluminous body of writing on sweating had been aimed throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. The socially and economically prominent patrons attracted by the exhibition, the article seems to indicate, could have a genuine impact in combating sweating by leading the shift in public opinion that reformers had been hoping to achieve for decades. The influences at work in this broad collaborative project were focused on representative methods: the organizing groups brought together a class-based agenda and experience of investigating the conditions of blackleg work to create a visualizing strategy to involve socially and economically influential members of society. By showing spectators conditions that were otherwise difficult to document, they hoped to raise broad

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[42] Gerard Noel, 'Ena, princess of Battenberg (1887–1969)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36656> [accessed 27 February 2017].
[43] *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, p. 8.
[44] 'Sweating Exhibition', *Daily News*, 4 May 1906, p. 7.

awareness among consumers. In the final weeks of the exhibition, which had been extended into June, the *Daily News* informed readers:

> do not imagine that because this Exhibition is concerned with hard facts it will not be interesting to you. For here is not only that irresistible logic of facts which supplies material for the statistician, but also that irresistible pathos of facts which supplies material for the novelist and playwright. It is for the readers of 'The Daily News' to help form such a strong body of public opinion on these matters as shall make it impossible, in the years to come, for such an Exhibition as this to be held, which shall remove the necessity for such an Exhibition. By visiting the Exhibition in person they will impress the Facts vividly on their minds. Armed with the memory of that visit, they will strive all the more strenuously for the removal of those evils which it is the business of this Exhibition to reveal.[45]

The appeal of the exhibition as a society event also helped to move consumer activism out of a specialist investigative and activist discourse; if consumer interest and activism could become fashionable, this would create a broad base of support in ways that previous publications had been unable to do.

The exhibition's representative strategy was developed from an international context that showed how visualizations of local problems could be transferred across borders. The idea for the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' was described by one of the organizers, H. W. Smith, as 'frankly borrowed from the authors of the similar exhibition in Berlin in the early part of the present year'.[46] The Berlin 'Heimarbeit-Ausstellung' [Home work exhibition] had opened on 17 January 1906 in the Alte Akademie, Unter den Linden.[47] It presented visitors with displays of the 'products of various home industries, ticketed with the remuneration of the worker and time spent in the manufacture'.[48] The 'Heimarbeit-Ausstellung' of 1906 'had been preceded in 1904 by a modest effort of the same kind in connection with the Congress for the Protection of

[45] 'Facts at the Sweated Industries Exhibition', *Daily News*, 4 June 1906, p. 2.
[46] H. W. Smith, 'The German Home-Work Exhibition, Berlin, 1906', in *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, pp. 19–22 (p. 19).
[47] Amsterdam, International Institute of Social History (IISH), Bro D 2970/125, *Die Heimarbeitausstellung in Berlin* (n.p. [Nuremberg]: n.pub. [Simon], n.d. [1906]), p. 1.
[48] 'The Berlin Exhibition of Home-Industries', *Women's Industrial News*, March 1906, pp. 543–44 (p. 543).

home workers', also in Berlin.[49] The success of the exhibition strategy at the congress had prompted organizers to introduce it to the general public. Although other exhibitions of exploitative labour conditions had taken place before the turn of the century, the 'Heimarbeit-Ausstellung' sparked an international trend, and exhibitions of this kind, organized by diverse groups of activists, became a common feature across Europe and the United States in the early years of the twentieth century. For instance, the 'Heimarbeit-Ausstellung' was cited as the inspiration for home work exhibitions held in 1909 in the Netherlands and Switzerland.[50] In France, 'Expositions of Economic Horrors' displaying 'lists of prices consumers paid for various articles of clothing, presented alongside hours workers spent making those same items and the appallingly low rates they were paid', with an accompanying programme of lectures, were organized predominantly by women who engaged in social activism on a Catholic basis.[51] The strategy was also embraced by consumers' leagues: the 1908 International Conference of Consumers' Leagues included exhibitions of goods produced in sweatshops in contrast to consumers' league-approved factories.[52] Kristina Huneault shows that the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' in London 'sparked a vogue for such events' in Britain too, and 'between 1906 and 1914 over a hundred towns and cities throughout the United Kingdom held their own civic exposés of sweated labour'.[53] Mitchell notes that the CSU sponsored an exhibition of sweated labour in 1913.[54] In Berlin, the concept was revived in 1925 in order to test what advances had been made by labour legislation enacted in 1911 following the 1906 exhibition in Berlin and a

[49] Smith, 'The German Home-Work Exhibition', in *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, p. 19.
[50] IISH Zw1960/356, Jakob Lorenz, *Heimarbeit und Heimbarbeitausstellung in der Schweiz* (Zurich: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Schweiz. Grütlivereins, 1909), p. 3, and IISH EHB Cat/2/F/95, *Gids voor de Nederlandsche Tentoonstelling van Huisindustrie* (n.p. [Amsterdam]: n.pub., n.d. [1909]), p. 29.
[51] Judith G. Coffin, *The Politics of Women's Work: The Paris Garment Trades 1750–1915* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 217.
[52] Nathan, p. 100.
[53] Kristina Huneault, *Difficult Subjects: Working Women and Visual Culture, Britain 1880–1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 135.
[54] Mitchell, p. 324.

comparable exhibition in Frankfurt in 1908.[55] The enthusiasm of so many different activist groups suggests that exhibitions were considered to be a representative strategy that was effective both in engaging a broad audience and in reflecting the conditions of sweated labour. It was an extension of the strategy of using sample cases to reflect common conditions: displaying a selection of consumer goods alongside indications of hours and wages would convey the sense that the hours were too long and the wages too low, while sidestepping the difficulty of explaining the irregularity and incoherence of wider data on wages and hours. An exhibition required less energy from the audience than the selection, purchase, and reading of a volume of investigative data would, and the sight of a range of everyday items in this defamiliarized context was likely to be more affecting and convincing than one investigator's statements. The choice of the exhibits and their presentation, furthermore, allowed the exhibition organizers to mediate the visitor's impressions and understanding.

The attraction of the exhibition format for British anti-sweating activists certainly was its visual appeal. The first tentative suggestions for the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' appeared in March 1906 in the *Women's Industrial News* (*WIN*) and show the WIC's interest in visualizing the social problem of sweating, in contrast with their familiar strategy of documenting and publishing the facts and figures of wages and conditions that they discovered through their social investigations. The project of motivating a public conscience was central from the beginning. The article stated: 'The [Berlin] exhibition has, at any rate, succeeded in drawing public attention to the evils of these miserable home industries', and asked: 'Might not a similar exhibition here in London have a good effect?' The strategy could successfully be adopted because '[o]ur home industries are probably less extensive than Germany's, but they exhibit unfortunately very much the same characteristics'. The initial idea was to repeat the

[55] See Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (SzB), Ff4281/55-9, Frieda Wunderlich, *Die Deutsche Heimarbeitausstellung, 1925* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1927), pp. 1, 2.

German model: the *WIN* suggested that '[a]n exhibition of the articles, ticketed with the rates of pay, might appeal to the eye and understanding of the public, while the same bare facts stated in print do not make much lasting impression'.[56] A retrospective article on the exhibition by Margaret MacDonald, a member of the WIC and of the exhibition organizing committee, however, shows that within the space of a couple of months the organizers had decided that it would give 'even more living interest to the English exhibition' to have 'the actual workers making the goods daily before the eyes of the public, and answering the many questions put to them by the visitors'. Based on nation-wide research by the WIC, the exhibition included '[f]orty-four men and women — chiefly women — […] plying as many different kinds of work'.[57] The normal working environments of the participating workers were reproduced insofar as this was possible in a concert hall, and where possible they did their usual work and 'had their family budgets and personal circumstances printed on cards by their stalls'.[58] This arrangement took the exhibition beyond previously tested representative strategies in anti-sweating activism by showing visitors the workers themselves. A sense of workers' self-representation is evoked, as they were able to interact with visitors who could ask them questions. The possibility of explaining individual cases would preclude reliance on incomplete data collected by investigators, as the participating workers would be able to fill in gaps in the information provided. In practice, however, the efficacy of this interactive strategy was limited and questionable. As the next section will show in detail, the exhibition of living workers risked reproducing a sense of slumming as visitors might be motivated by inquisitiveness or a desire for titillation as well as by concern.

[56] 'The Berlin Exhibition of Home-Industries', p. 544.
[57] Margaret MacDonald, 'The "Daily News" Sweated Home Industries Exhibition', *Women's Industrial News*, June 1906, p. 558.
[58] Sheila Blackburn, '"To Be Poor and To Be Honest … Is the Hardest Struggle of All": Sweated Needlewomen and Campaigns for Protective Legislation, 1840–1914', in *Famine and Fashion*, ed. by Harris, pp. 243–57 (p. 249).

It seems clear that the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' saw the usefulness of involving real workers to tell a more consistent story about home work. Exhibitions that only showed the products of sweated labour had been less successful in resolving the question of the variable nature of available data on sweating, and organizers were very aware of its implications in the collection and representation of exhibition content. H. W. Smith pointed out, with reference to the data collected for the handbook to the 'Heimarbeit-Ausstellung' in Berlin:

> These 230 pages of tables are, taken as a whole, a dispiriting record of underpay and overwork. […] We are warned nevertheless that the impression conveyed by these lists will probably be more favourable than the facts would justify. There is generally a reluctance on the part of the worker to admit the *worst worst*. Moreover the considerable time often lost in fetching and returning the work is not counted, and nothing, naturally, can be reckoned for wear and tear of, for instance, sewing machines.[59]

The collection and collation of data for large national or international surveys and exhibitions such as the 'Heimarbeit-Ausstellung', furthermore, revealed the extent of regional and cultural variations in prices, wages, and labour practices that might obscure the reality of the workers' poverty. One pamphlet entitled simply *Heimarbeit-Ausstellung Berlin 1906*, which presented data on a number of common home industries in Germany, summed up the impossibility of calculating regular incomes in home work. The section on glove making attempted to strip away as much confusing information as possible by settling on the example of a single female worker who had no domestic duties to take time away from her paid labour, in Burg, where glove making was a common trade. A worker like this could make 15–18 pairs of gloves during a working day of 11–12 hours, earning 10 Pfennig (0.10 Mark) the pair. These earnings were scaled up to a weekly total, from which the author then deduced an hourly wage of 13–15 Pf. It was noted, however, that extra time needed to be spent on preparatory work,

[59] Smith, 'The German Home-Work Exhibition', in *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, p. 21, emphasis in original.

and on fetching the work and delivering it once completed. Even if these more-or-less definite calculations were accepted, however, the author warned:

> If this weekly wage of a diligent worker is already low, it would still be a grave mistake to multiply these figures by fifty-two in order to reach an annual income of 468 Mark. This would be incorrect, as there is a yearly 'dead season' in the glove trade, during which demand is low, no work is given out for a period of weeks or months, and wages fall considerably.[60]

The pamphlet's recognition of these difficulties in calculating incomes in home industries offered context that showed that the information given in the exhibition did not reflect the worst aspects of labour exploitation. The exhibition of home industries in the Netherlands, held in Amsterdam in 1909, which exhibited living workers, pre-empted possible irregularities in data provided on hours and wages. The guidebook to the exhibition reproduced a list of questions put to the participating workers that were designed to determine what variations occurred in their working hours. Participants were asked whether their work took place solely at home or partially in a workshop or factory, what their working hours were and whether these applied throughout the year, whether members of the family or others joined in the work, whether they worked on Sundays, and what their average weekly working hours were.[61] This rigorous line of questioning seemed intended to eliminate any erroneous preconceptions about sabbath work, the participation in the work of members of the household and other workers, and overtime; but at the same time these questions illustrated how elusive concrete data was in home work practices.

For Black, the possibilities offered by the exhibition format of highlighting these aspects of home work appear to have been crucial in elucidating the change in her views on consumer activism. In her essay 'Suggested Remedies' in the exhibition handbook, she discussed possible solutions to the problem of sweated home work. She noted some

[60] SzB Fd2381/5, 'Die Heimarbeit in der Handschuhindustrie', in *Heimarbeit-Ausstellung Berlin 1906* (Berlin: Vorwärts, 1906), pp. 1–5 (pp. 4–5).
[61] IISH EHB Cat/2/F/95, 'Algemene Vragenlijst', in *Gids voor de Nederlandsche Tentoonstelling van Huisindustrie*, pp. 60–64.

of the features of home work revealed by the exhibition that made it particularly difficult to regulate, and explored possible solutions. She stated:

> There are certain evils to which home-work is by its very nature more liable than is work carried out in a factory or workshop.
> These evils are: (1) excessive hours; (2) unsuitability of workplace; (3) the employment of child labour; (4) low pay.[62]

She also pointed out the involuntary nature of home workers' blackleg identity, informing the reader that '[t]he poorer the worker the less possible is resistance to any reduction in pay'.[63] The exhibition did not shrink from revealing the use of child labour in home industries: among the photographs in the handbook that showed home workers engaged in their trades was a picture of children participating in home-based hook and eye carding (Fig. 11). The high profile of the exhibition served to convince a wide audience of the truth of these circumstances and to motivate them to take action to resist the levels of exploitation that pressed children into service and caused excessive hours of work. In 'Suggested Remedies' and a number of subsequent publications, however, Black sought to mediate this impulse to activism in exhibition visitors. She returned to the idea of a consumers' league to suggest that 'the attempt, if renewed in England at the present time, and if headed by wealth and well-known people, might be able to produce some direct results, and might, in any case, become a valuable instrument of education'. Primarily, however, she indicated that consumers' leagues were a well-intentioned 'direct expression of the consumer's uneasiness of conscience'. She stated:

> that a Consumers' League could, in the present stage of social progress, completely fulfil its aims seems impossible. At a later stage of development, when the workers, being better organised and educated, become able effectively to support it, such a league might conceivably become a very powerful agent.[64]

[62] Black, 'Suggested Remedies', in *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, p. 22.
[63] Black, 'Suggested Remedies', in *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, p. 23.
[64] Black, 'Suggested Remedies', in *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, p. 26.

Figure 11: ‘Hook and Eye Carding’, in *Handbook of the ‘Daily News’ Sweated Industries Exhibition*, compiled by Richard Mudie-Smith (London: Burt, 1906), p. 38. *Internet Archive*.

As matters stood, however, she explained, the blackleg workers subject to sweating conditions were themselves still in too weak a position to support a consumers' league of the kind she had proposed in the 1880s. Instead, she noted that:

> While there is always a possibility whenever home-work is carried on that children may be set to work, the danger of their being kept at work for very long hours, and to their own lasting injury is only really serious where the pressure of poverty is extreme. The real cure for the labour of children lies in the adequate payment of the labour of the parents.[65]

In other words, home workers should be offered an escape from the self-perpetuating blackleg nature of their work in order to strengthen their own position. The adequate payment of their work would allow them to work without the negative consequences attendant on sweating practices, as it would offer them an escape from the pressures of extreme poverty that caused them to undermine their own wages and those of others.

In her typical fashion, Black did not fail to present her readers with what she considered to be a suitable channel for their impulses to activism. On the final day of the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition', she published an article entitled 'A Living-Wage League' in the *Daily News*. Through this platform, which was likely to reach a readership whose interest in the exhibition and its socio-economic aims had been carefully fostered and maintained by the column space the paper had devoted to it over the course of the exhibition, Black set out her new approach to consumer activism. Again, she warned her readers against the temptation of joining a consumers' league; instead, she urged the need for a fixed legal minimum wage in unregulated work. The support of consumers was necessary to achieve this legislative change, as it 'should come […] at the demand of a great majority of the people and as the expression of a national desire to right a national wrong'.[66] While Black's readjustment of her priorities reflected a move away from community activism to a campaign directly calling for legislative change, this campaign for legal action on the problem of sweated labour

[65] Black, 'Suggested Remedies', in *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, pp. 23–24.
[66] Clementina Black, 'A Living-Wage League', *Daily News*, 13 June 1906, p. 6.

clearly still relied on popular support. The exhibition had been intended, like her previously published exposés of working conditions, to touch the conscience of consumers and inspire them with a sense of responsibility for the realities revealed to them. In 'Suggested Remedies' she had stated her belief that 'that growth of a public conscience which is so marked a feature in English life of the last eighty years or so' would work to check the problem of sweating.[67] This public consciousness, however, did require mediation from activists to ensure that it was channelled towards a specific goal: namely, legislative influence. Where she had previously presented the possibility of a consumers' league as an activist initiative for women subject to consumer guilt, she now encouraged 'the uneasy of conscience' to '[j]oin the Living Wage League'.[68] The representative function of the exhibition, as far as Black was concerned, appears to have been the same as her previous representations of the conditions of blackleg work. The habitual working conditions of the participants in the exhibition would have revealed the strain to which sweated workers were subject, and the workers themselves would have shown visitors that they did not choose the conditions of their work. Her articles offered a channel for activism to those exhibition visitors who were motivated to undertake action against the conditions they had seen.

In September 1906, the *WIN* noted, as part of an article describing activist projects established to consolidate the interest produced by the exhibition, that Black was 'engaged upon a book dealing with the question of underpayment in relation to a minimum wage'; the result was *Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage*.[69] The volume developed many of the ideas she had articulated in publications relating to the exhibition. Revisiting the idea of a consumers' league, she highlighted the need for mediation alongside visualization of the problem. She wrote:

[67] Black, 'Suggested Remedies', in *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, p. 25.
[68] Black, 'A Living-Wage League'.
[69] 'The Anti-Sweating League', *Women's Industrial News*, September 1906, pp. 567–68.

> When men and women who are not themselves underpaid come face to face with the evil of underpayment, it is natural enough for them to resolve that henceforth the articles purchased by themselves shall be articles the makers of which have been adequately paid. From this individual resolve it is but one step to an association of persons all thus resolved, and banded together for the purposes of investigation and exclusive dealing. Such an association is a 'Consumers' League,' the aim of which is to 'check unlimited competition not at the point of manufacture but at the point of sale.' Such associations […] are likely to reappear at times like the present when many consciences are disturbed by recognition of the fact that a considerable proportion of British workers are scandalously underpaid.[70]

Having acknowledged this tendency, Black immediately forestalled interest in a consumers' league as a suitable channel for consumer activism by proceeding to explain 'how and why a Consumers' League must inevitably fail in its aims'.[71] Her reasons for dismissing the well-intentioned scheme centred on the contemporary production process, which, she explained, was so dispersed that it would be impossible to determine whether a particular shop would meet any standards of ethical employment. She stated that '[i]n regard to every single article it becomes necessary to trace every step of production and transmission', and illustrated this with the example of the amount and range of labour involved in the production and sale of a single pair of shoes.[72] She wrote:

> A pair of shoes cannot be satisfactorily guaranteed until we have discovered the wages and conditions of employment not only of every person who has worked upon the actual shoe, but also of the tanner, the thread weaver and winder, the maker of eyelets, the spinner and weaver of the shoe-lace and the various operatives engaged upon the little metal tag at the shoe-lace's end. Nor is the matter finished even then. At every stage of its evolution, a shoe requires the services of clerks, book-keepers, office-boys, warehousemen, packers, boxmakers, carmen, railway servants &c., and each new service introduces other material and other service — paper, ink, ledgers, harness, stable fittings, cardboard, string, glue, iron, coal — the series is endless.[73]

It would be impossible, she stated, to verify the conditions of each of these workers. She concluded:

[70] Black, *Sweated Industry*, pp. 205–06.
[71] Black, *Sweated Industry*, p. 206.
[72] Black, *Sweated Industry*, p. 208.
[73] Black, *Sweated Industry*, pp. 208–09.

> The fact is that even the most apparently simple of commercial acts is but one link in a network that spreads over the whole field of life and labour; and the fabric of that network is not woven once and for ever, but is in continual process of change …[74]

Thus, the production process could be said not only to alienate the worker, but also the consumer who could not keep track of where consumer goods were coming from. Global trade confused the matter yet further. Historian Sheila Blackburn refers to the same reality of worker and consumer alienation to argue the effectiveness of the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition', as she points out that seeing the workers at their trades revealed to '[t]hose who had advocated consumers' leagues as a possible solution' that 'clothing made in clean and healthy workshops and by well-paid labor might, nevertheless, be trimmed with braid, buttons, hooks and eyes carded in sweating dens' (see fig. 11).[75] This appears to echo the example given by Harkness in the *Labour Elector* of 'the poor wretch who made the trimming for the Queen's Jubilee carriages', pointing out that the lavishness of the festivities marking Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887 did not mean that all the workers involved in them were generously or even adequately paid.[76] In contrast to the point argued by the narrative of consumer guilt that blamed consumers who paid low prices for the underpayment of workers, facts like these made clear that the idea that there was a direct link between the prices paid for goods and the wages paid to workers was by no means necessarily true. Thus, Black argued that a consumers' league 'may be a valuable social agency, but can never hope to be an economic remedy for underpayment' in itself.[77]

It is important here to recognize the different roles ascribed by Black to the involvement of the worker and the consumer in the potential — though always necessarily limited — success of a consumers' league. The workers, she insisted, must be able to support any successful league. On the other hand, she described any success

[74] Black, *Sweated Industry*, p. 209.
[75] Blackburn, 'To Be Poor', in *Famine and Fashion*, ed. by Harris, p. 250.
[76] Harkness, 'To the Editor of the *Labour Elector*'.
[77] Black, *Sweated Industry*, p. 211.

as dependent on the support of 'wealth and well-known people' in order to raise awareness and increase the socio-economic influence of the league. Like the activists of the NCL, Black concluded that, in the complex market producing blackleg work, neither ethical shopping nor workshop organization could combat practices of undercutting as labour was outsourced and cheaper goods imported, and neither labour organizers nor consumers could monitor conditions of production. The visualizing strategy of the exhibition had brought to a wide audience the conditions of poverty in which sweated work existed, but Black insisted that more than sympathy was required to combat these conditions. Legal safeguarding of a minimum wage would allow the protection of workers in Britain, leaving no scope for the idea that employers were obliged to lower wages to offer goods at competitive prices.

In Black's approach, the role of the reformer as mediator of the exhibition's visualizing strategy was central in guiding the sympathetic impulses of concerned visitors. The mediation of the organizers, however, went much further in giving visitors the impression that they were seeing an accurate representation of sweated work. The representative strategy of the exhibition in fact relied frequently on the evocation of sentimental tropes, and guided the visitors' assumptions. For reasons that were linked both to practical circumstances and to the emotional impact of the exhibition, its representation of sweated work was adapted for its target audience.

Visualization and representation

Whether the exhibits were goods produced under sweating conditions, or the sweated workers themselves, the representative strategies employed by exhibitions of sweated labour made no secret of their consumer-centred nature. They served to inform consumers of the conditions under which the goods they bought were produced, but in order to be able to do so they had to attract visitors as consumers of the exhibition. They

also had to exert sufficient emotional appeal to persuade visitors to support activist schemes for the amelioration of poverty conditions. The exhibits fulfilled the same representative role as the images, anecdotes, and examples included in written accounts of blackleg labour: they illustrated irregular data to show the strain of poverty that was a common feature of high levels of labour exploitation. In this way, the exhibits were required to stand in for a problem of wide and complex dimensions, and their representative function was mediated by the exhibition organizers. Where living workers were displayed as part of the exhibition, however, the ethical implications of the exhibition as a visualizing strategy differed from the fictional and fictionalized representations in the published work of Black and Harkness. While anonymized and possibly fictionalized case studies could be used as typical examples of exploitative conditions, the involvement of living workers troubled this use of generalization as the workers' individuality was compromised. The worker and the consumer may have been brought face to face, but the confrontation was mediated to leave the consumer in the position of power.

The representation of blackleg work in the *Daily News* 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' prompted widely diverging views both among contemporary commentators and modern-day scholars. The exhibition strategy proved successful for the organizers, as it fulfilled its aims of engaging broad support for its campaign for a legal minimum wage. By September 1906, the *WIN* reported that '[a]n Anti-Sweating League, to secure a legal minimum wage, has been formed' and '[a] circular has been issued by the League asking for subscriptions to a guarantee fund, and announcing that a Conference will be held in October'.[78] This suggested that they were secure in their belief that the exhibition had attracted economically influential patrons from whom they could expect donations. On the other hand, commentators also expressed doubts about the sincerity

[78] 'The Anti-Sweating League', pp. 567, 568.

of the exhibition visitors. The question of whether the exhibition was able to bridge the emotional distance between workers and spectators was central to these discussions.

Commenting on the exhibition shortly after it had closed in June 1906, Margaret MacDonald wondered in the *WIN*: 'Will it do any good? Many no doubt will go home and forget. Many will be sadder, but by no means wiser. But others may get an insight, and perhaps an inspiration which they have never had before.'[79] These comments reflected a faith in the exhibition's representative strategy as exerting an emotional appeal, but also an acceptance that not every visitor was a potential activist. MacDonald suggested that as far as she was concerned, the exhibition's role was to reach a wide audience, and it was worthwhile if only some of the visitors were enlightened and inspired to support an activist cause. This strategy of exhibiting sweated workers to a wide audience regardless of its interest and intentions was questioned in the socialist press, which was markedly hostile to the exhibition. Many socialist commentators remained unconvinced that bringing wealthy exhibition visitors face to face with the working poor would serve to bridge the distance between classes. They suggested that the display of sympathy on the part of the spectators that the *Daily News* hailed as hopeful did not in fact betoken any fellow feeling with the workers, as the social and economic interests of the workers and the wealthy exhibition visitors remained intrinsically opposed. In an article entitled '"Sweated Industries" and High-Placed Hypocrisy', *Justice* described the spectators as 'well-meaning people, like philanthropic slave-drivers'. It stated: 'we may be quite sure none of the sympathisers of high degree want a social revolution. So they will continue to sweat the workers sympathetically.'[80] In other words, the wealthy exhibition visitors might express sympathy and pity when confronted with the human cost of the excesses of the economic system, but as they

[79] MacDonald.
[80] '"Sweated Industries" and High-Placed Hypocrisy', *Justice*, 5 May 1906, p. 1.

benefited personally from the status-quo that produced these conditions, they were not interested in bringing about real social change.

In the *Labour Leader*, Irish trade unionist Thomas Gavan-Duffy argued that the priorities of the exhibition were skewed because of its consumer-centred approach: it seemed to give a more central role to the visitors than to the workers. He wrote indignantly about the amount of attention given in the press to the appearance of the royal patrons over the situation of the sweated workers. He stated that, in one report in a daily paper,

> [s]eventy-seven lines of description were given to the silks and satins, the chiffon, and the picture hats, the jewellery and the gloves of third-rate royalty; whilst fourteen lines had to serve for describing the sweated industries and the sweated workers.

As such, he questioned '[w]hether the occasion will prove most memorable as a display of royal stage-play and flunkeyism, or as a means of alleviation of the sweated workers'.[81] Gavan-Duffy represented the notion of display as a means to activism as inherently suspect, as he considered it more likely to prompt showing off than sincere engagement with a social problem. He stated that the exhibition revealed 'details with which we have all been long familiar, and it is questionable whether a fashionable social function adorned even by royalty will do anything to right the wrongs of these poor people'.[82] Gavan-Duffy's calling into question of the efficacy of the exhibition's representative strategy and the audience it sought to engage constituted a criticism of its activist aims: like the article in *Justice*, he felt that there was no real concern for the workers, and that exhibition visitors had no intention of changing the position of blackleg workers. He stated that the economic progress of the nineteenth century had failed to improve the conditions of workers who remained underpaid, and suggested that only a reversal of the status-quo on socialist principles could effectively change the

[81] T. Gavan-Duffy, 'Two May-Day Exhibitions', *Labour Leader*, 11 May 1906, p. 744.
[82] Gavan-Duffy.

situations of workers like those who participated in the exhibition. The closing lines of his article read:

> For the human being, for the blouse maker and the brushmaker, there is a lonely dark, damp, ugly garret; there is the penny herring, the dry loaf, and the milkless tea; the endless round of sordid toil; the grim battle for life, the never-ending conflict against poverty and disease. Here are the conditions which in the past have given Socialist agitation its justification, and will to-day and to-morrow provide us with an almost fierce incentive to push on our cause. Let us on, then, with our battle until the wealth now wrung from Labour […] shall be used to rescue the sweated brushmaker and skirtmaker from their dens of pain and pauperism, and endow them with the rights and joys of life in the country which they by their toil have made rich.[83]

Neither Gavan-Duffy nor the article in *Justice* acknowledged the sweated workers' blackleg status as underpaid workers who undermined the organization for better conditions; but the assumption of their powerlessness was underlined by his assertion that socialism would 'rescue' sweated workers from their exploitative conditions. Gavan-Duffy's representation of sweated workers as victims thus had elements in common with the emotional appeal of the exhibition; he took issue primarily with the audience it sought to appeal to.

Gavan-Duffy's report of the exhibition ascribed an active representative role to the participating workers: he described them as showing their working practices to the exhibition visitors, which gave the impression that they were giving demonstrations rather than appearing as passive exhibits. He related how a 'shawl fringer demonstrated how she earned 5s. per week of 102 hours' and a 'female brushmaker was also showing how by filling 1,000 holes she earned 6½d., and totalled up 6s. per week'.[84] Blackburn gives a similar impression of the exhibition when she argues that the workers who took part were 'participants in a dynamic, living spectacle' rather than exhibits.[85] By giving spectators access to living workers, she argues, the educational interactivity of the

[83] Gavan-Duffy.
[84] Gavan-Duffy.
[85] Blackburn, 'To Be Poor', in *Famine and Fashion*, ed. by Harris, p. 249.

exhibition worked both ways, as the workers on display could interact directly and personally with the spectators to explain their personal experience of exploitative working conditions. They 'answered questions put to them by the crowds [and] spoke on platforms with renowned celebrities of the day, such as […] George Bernard Shaw'.[86] Blackburn suggests that the presence of the workers and the opportunities given to them to tell their own stories lent credibility to the information presented in the exhibition. She notes that this signalled a step forward in the discourse of anti-sweating activism from the stylized representations of sweating that had characterized the mid-nineteenth century: the 'uncomplaining and inert victims' depicted in paintings and poems like 'The Song of the Shirt'.[87]

The exhibition handbook, however, cast some doubt on the idea that participating workers were able to bridge the class distance between themselves and the exhibition visitors on their own terms by sharing their personal experience of the effects of labour exploitation. If they had greater individuality than fictionalized representations of victims of the sweating system, their role in the exhibition remained primarily representative of the impact of sweating conditions, and their participation appears to have been strongly mediated by the exhibition organizers. As a result, they merely performed their work for an audience in an environment that mimicked their usual workspace. The image on the cover of the handbook suggests that the importance of appealing to consumers may have had an impact on the way workers were represented (Fig. 12). Although photographs of real workers were included within the handbook, the cover appears consciously to have evoked earlier artistic representations of 'uncomplaining and inert victims' of labour exploitation. Instead of presenting an image of a real worker, it showed an illustration that seems to have been tailored to conceptions that exhibition visitors may have had of sweated home work. Its

[86] Blackburn, 'To Be Poor', in *Famine and Fashion*, ed. by Harris, p. 249.
[87] Blackburn, 'To Be Poor', in *Famine and Fashion*, ed. by Harris, p. 249.

representation of home work as causing squalor, malnutrition, and neglect of children appears to have been designed for its emotive appeal.

The illustration portrayed two female sweated home workers: one is holding a pot of glue, the other pieces of cardboard, and what look like matchboxes are stacked around the room. Home-based box making was frequently reported on in studies of sweated home work, including Black's 1892 article 'Match-Box Making at Home'; the exhibition handbook itself included a section on 'Match Box Making' by Liberal M. P. Leo Chiozza Money.[88] This section was illustrated with two photographs showing 'Match Box Makers' and 'Match and Tin-Tack Box Making' (Figs 13 and 14). These images show groups of workers — apparently adults or young adults — working together in rooms that are small, with much space taken up by the materials needed for the work. The various signifiers of exploitative labour that these photographs reveal, however, were exaggerated in the cover illustration. The women depicted in the illustration are stereotyped versions of the victimized home worker: they are hunched over, their faces look pinched, there are dark shadows under their eyes, and their hair is unkempt and possibly greying prematurely. Their surroundings are cramped and untidy; the bare bed may be seen just behind one of the workers. The washing drying overhead — patched and mended like the workers' clothing — and the presence of a baby and a toddler reflected the double shift of paid work and household responsibilities. The image suggested that these women's work caused them to neglect the children: one holds the baby on one shoulder while her hands are busy with the hot glue, and the toddler is sitting on the bare floor. The child looks malnourished and badly clothed; its thin legs appear shorter than its arms and the shape and angle of the feet and knees may suggest physical disability. It is holding what looks like one of the matchboxes to its mouth. The depiction of this working family plays into contemporary discourses about

[88] L. G. Chiozza Money, 'Match Box Making', in *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, pp. 95–98.

the alleged physical degeneration of the working classes: the adults look unhealthy and old before their time, while the children seem to have little chance of a healthy adulthood. The image is more reminiscent of the emotionally evocative covers of Harkness's shilling novels than, for instance, the capable working women Black portrayed in her campaign articles and in *Married Women's Work*. The hunched, overworked figures in the drawing do not give the impression of vocal workers ready to speak to influential exhibition visitors or address a crowd from a platform. Even if the exhibition itself did offer the workers involved opportunities to speak on their own terms, the cover of the exhibition handbook suggests that its initial method of appeal was complicit in the reduction of individual workers to powerless symbols of the evil of sweating that were recognizable for an audience familiar with fictional and stereotyped representations.

The content of the handbook also deliberately depersonalized the participating workers. The photographs illustrating the various trades described were captioned with the type of work, but no information about the workers. Occasionally a reference to place was included, but this merely enhanced the sense that the worker portrayed had only a representative function: they were described as a 'Cradley Chain Maker' or a 'Bromsgrove Nail Maker'.[89] In the programme of lectures included in the handbook, only one lecture was explicitly listed as delivered by a worker, and this worker was not named: the lecture was advertised as '"Sweating." — By one of the Sweated'.[90] A letter entitled 'De Profundis' and signed 'An Ex-Machinist' was included in the handbook 'because it represents the experience of a host of similar sufferers'.[91] The handbook stated that the letter had been anonymized to protect the writer's identity, and it is possible that a deliberate choice was made not to name the participating workers in

[89] *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, pp. 58, 66.
[90] *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, p. 7.
[91] *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, pp. 118–19.

order to prevent their being stigmatized by employers; but this raises another problem. On the one hand, the role of the participating workers as exhibits and symbols of a system of exploitation is rendered more poignant by the knowledge that they ran significant personal risks to be able to appear. On the other hand, however, although many of the organizers of the exhibition had extensive knowledge of the conditions of blackleg work, none of them were or had been sweated workers themselves, and they therefore did not have to reckon with the concern that their already precarious livelihoods could be imperilled by their participation in a high-profile activist initiative. The anonymous workers thus played the most significant part in the exhibition but also ran the greatest risk in the organizers' project to appeal to consumers.

The danger to their livelihood that the workers incurred by participating in an event that would expose their employers was one difficult question that had to be addressed by the organizers of the exhibitions in both Berlin and London. Smith writes with regard to the Berlin exhibition that 'it was found that many of the workers declined to send articles for exhibition owing to fear of the employers', and he makes clear that the organizers of the exhibition relied heavily on the support of trade unions in obtaining material to exhibit.[92] This problem was necessarily enhanced when the workers personally appeared to show how they were exploited. MacDonald made clear that

> there has been difficulty in many cases in getting the materials for them to work on, as their work was slack, or they were afraid to do their usual work, and each had to be guaranteed for a certain time against victimisation and loss.[93]

[92] Smith, 'The German Home-Work Exhibition', in *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, p. 20.
[93] MacDonald.

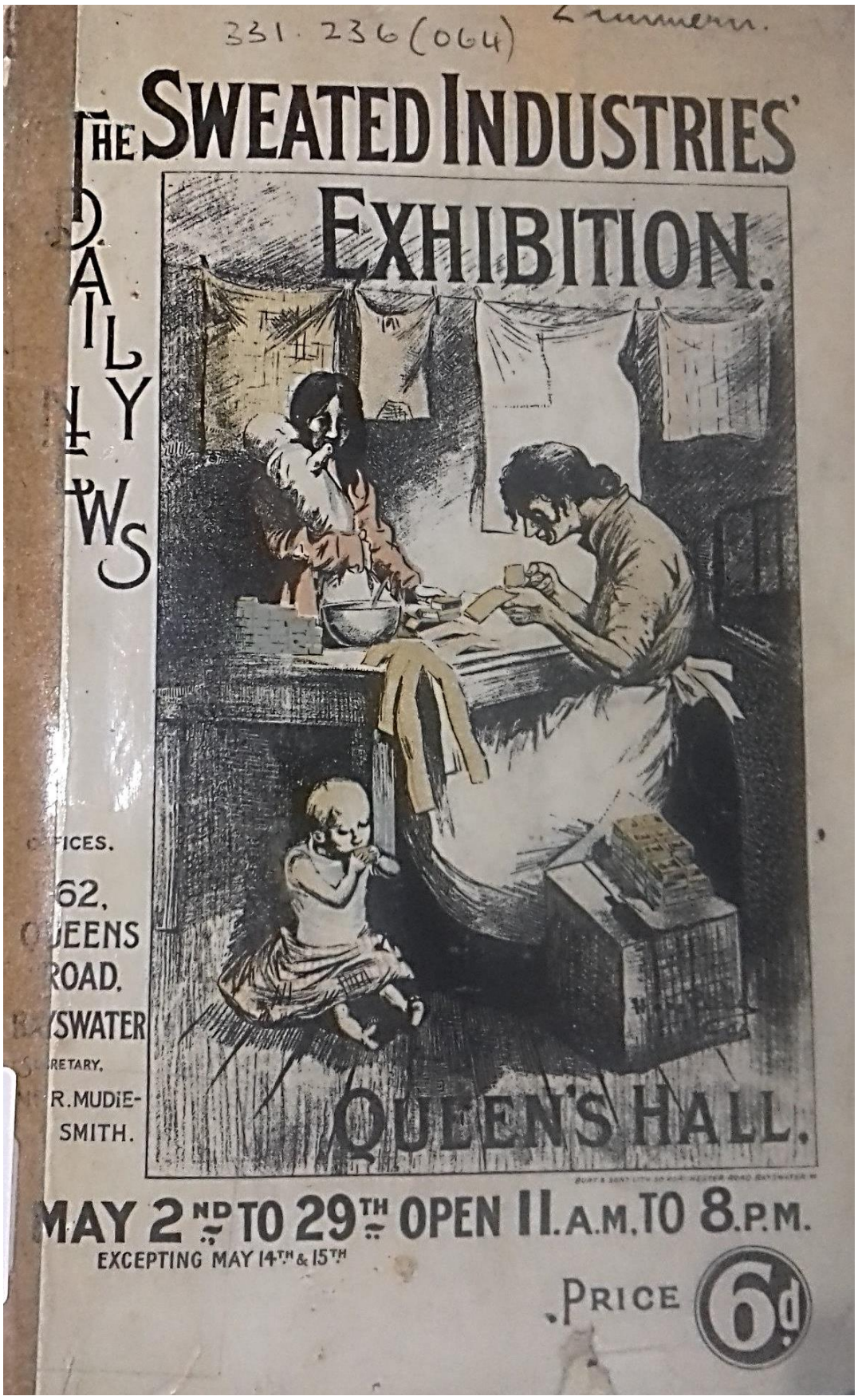

Figure 12: Cover of the *Handbook of the 'Daily News' Sweated Industries Exhibition.*

The Women's Library, London School of Economics and Political Science, London.

Figure 13: ‘Match-Box Makers’, in *Handbook of the ‘Daily News’ Sweated Industries Exhibition*, p. 96. *Internet Archive*.

Figure 14: ‘Match and Tin-Tack Box Making’, in *Handbook of the ‘Daily News’ Sweated Industries Exhibition*, p. 97. *Internet Archive*.

Although the exhibition aimed to bring consumers face to face with workers, the mediation of the organizers had far-reaching consequences for the way workers were represented. The personal circumstances of the workers, and the risks they ran to be able to participate, made it difficult to give a realistic insight into sweated working conditions, as employers were likely to resent their workers for participating or revealing the full reality of their situation, or workers could not do their regular work for fear of involving their employers. These concerns were not addressed in detail in the exhibition handbook, meaning that the full extent of the precarious employment of the blackleg workers was not reflected.

If the exhibition organizers sought to protect the workers by anonymizing them, this also had the effect of representing them as symbols of a sweating system rather than as individual workers. The section 'Particulars of Workers at Stalls' described the participants in a style more reminiscent of social investigation case notes than a representation of independent individual workers. The 'Remarks' section for 'Worker No. 1', for instance, reads: 'Worker is a widow with four children, the eldest of whom is 9 years and the youngest 3 years. She is in receipt of parochial relief. "The children all look healthy, and are kept very nicely."'[94] No attribution was given for the quotation regarding the appearance of the worker's children, perhaps reinforcing the notion that she and her family, as well as her working conditions, could be freely commented on. Huneault is clear in her criticism of the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' as objectifying the exhibited workers in what she calls 'the basic stratagem of putting the working poor "on show"', one of a 'whole range of late-Victorian and Edwardian exhibiting practices which sought to rehabilitate *for* culture the somewhat peripheral and possibly troubling figure of the woman worker'.[95] Huneault argues that the exhibition relied on making the workers visible and viewable in a specific cultural context in order to gain significant

[94] *Handbook*, compiled by Mudie-Smith, p. 120.
[95] Huneault, p. 144, emphasis in original.

attention. In other words, the exhibition brought the practice of slumming into the West End and licensed spectators' voyeurism under the guise of consumer concern. The de-individualization and consequent dehumanization of the workers formed a part of this strategy. Huneault notes that

> despite the unmistakable element of surveillance within sweated industries exhibitions, accounts of the events give very little sense of who these women were. We know almost nothing about what they thought, how they felt or what they experienced as they sat on display. Indeed, the presence of actual women only serves to highlight their absence from any effective contribution to the means of their representation.[96]

Huneault's argument highlights the difference between visualization and representation: visitors were able to see the workers on display and conditions approaching those in which they worked, but the workers themselves remained largely unseen. Their role was to be part of a cultural tableau rather than to set out their own experience of a flawed system.

Because the exhibition was explicitly intended to engage broad support to ameliorate the position of blackleg workers, it is perhaps not surprising that its representative strategy emphasized the powerlessness of the participating workers: in order to persuade potential activists that their involvement was necessary, the workers' own inability to break out of their blackleg position had to be made clear. Both the *Daily News* and Black herself heralded the interest of influential visitors as leading a broad front of support for legislative change; and while he disapproved of the exhibition's appeal to the elite, Gavan-Duffy too presented blackleg workers as in need of rescue. Blackburn's representation of the possibilities the exhibition offered to workers to stand up to their conditions also seems to rely on the support of better-placed activists. She writes that the workers, '[e]mboldened by Cadbury's promise to indemnify them if their employers dismissed them', 'implored the Independent Labour

[96] Huneault, p. 155.

Party to intervene on their behalf': in other words, they required support from one third party to ask another to act for them against their employers.[97]

The outcome of the exhibition, as intended, was to strengthen the position of the organizers to lobby for legislative change on the workers' behalf. In her comments after the exhibition had closed, MacDonald had expressed a cautious hope that 'the show may help us to push on our suggested licensing of home workshops'.[98] In fact, as Blackburn shows, significantly greater gains were made following the exhibition, which she describes as the turning point that produced the 'fundamental break in laissez-faire attitudes towards state intervention in the legal control of low pay'.[99] 1906 'saw the arrival in power of a New Liberal government prepared to pass laws to eradicate sweating. [It] also saw the establishment of an earnings and hours committee to collect systemic data on wages for the first time.'[100] Simultaneously, she states, the exhibition inspired the creation of 'an all-party pressure group, the National Anti-Sweating League' as well as a Select Committee on Homework, which paved the way for protective legislation in 1909.[101] Thus the shock-and-shame tactics of the exhibition precipitated a move towards the application of direct pressure on government bodies to pass legislation to combat sweating. All of these gains, however, were achieved through the mediation of anti-sweating activists who repurposed the format of the 'Heimarbeit-Ausstellung' and translated the experience of the workers on display to appeal to the audience they had in mind. The exhibition reflected activist strategies devised and carried out on the workers' behalf, and although the workers participating in the exhibition ostensibly had opportunities to interact with spectators and vice versa, this interaction does not appear to have taken place on the workers' own terms.

[97] Blackburn, 'To Be Poor', in *Famine and Fashion*, ed. by Harris, p. 249.
[98] MacDonald.
[99] Blackburn, 'To Be Poor', in *Famine and Fashion*, ed. by Harris, p. 244.
[100] Blackburn, 'To Be Poor', in *Famine and Fashion*, ed. by Harris, p. 249.
[101] Blackburn, 'To Be Poor', in *Famine and Fashion*, ed. by Harris, p. 251.

The representative strategy of the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' developed the use of personalized examples and evocative portrayals in studies of blackleg work that functioned to illustrate the impact of poverty conditions. The exhibition enhanced the sense of personal impact by creating the possibility of interaction between different social classes. Maria Grever and Berteke Waaldijk show how the illusion of interactivity could, in fact, function as another distancing act between the spectator and the social problem. In their study of another event in which living workers were exhibited, the 'Nationale Tentoonstelling Vrouwenarbeid' [National exhibition of women's labour] held in The Hague in 1898, they write that spectators looking at living human beings in the context of an educational exhibition 'could publicly indulge in the pleasure of the gaze while remaining anonymous in the crowd'. The exhibition structure, they argue, meant that a balance of power between spectator and exhibited person was maintained, as the exhibition visitor

> could absorb the physical details, shudder in disgust, or identify with what they saw […] At the same time, however, and this is the crucial point, the spectators could maintain their distance. They did not have to relate personally. They could gaze without fear of becoming the object of the gaze. A visitor could flee at any moment, turn around and walk away.[102]

The impact of the exhibition, in other words, was controlled by the spectator, not by the person on display. The exhibited person had no choice but to be equally visible to visitors who genuinely sought information as to spectators who came in search of titillation. These observations echo the *Daily News*'s hopeful remark that 'Society came, saw, and shuddered' and may be seen as tallying both with Gavan-Duffy's resentment of the social spectacle surrounding the exhibition as a fashionable society event, and with MacDonald's more charitable remark that '[m]any [visitors] will be sadder, but by no means wiser' as a result of seeing the exhibition. For some visitors, the workers on

[102] Maria Grever and Berteke Waaldijk, *Transforming the Public Sphere: The Dutch National Exhibition of Women's Labor in 1898*, transl. by Mischa F. C. Hoyinck and Robert E. Chesal (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 125.

display would indeed be no more than exhibits, and the spectacle would not lead to further engagement with the social problem. While the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' did place sweating inescapably in the public eye, Blackburn notes that there were also other factors which facilitated the introduction of anti-sweating legislation in the early twentieth century, such as the election of a new government ready to dismiss previously dominant laissez-faire tactics. Meanwhile, the individual spectator visiting the exhibition and gazing at the workers on display could keep their distance and turn their back on the social problem whenever they wished.

The use of exhibitions of sweated labour as representative strategies allowed for the circumvention of some of the difficulties involved in documenting sweated work by allowing the workers themselves to act as examples of the strain of poverty and to explain their own circumstances, but the artificial situation created by the exhibition setting also meant that the precarious nature of their economic position was not fully reflected. The possibility of interaction between participating workers and exhibition visitors, furthermore, is likely to have been limited. The exhibition structure meant that the participating workers played the role of representatives of the excesses of an economic system, and their appearance was depersonalized. The part of the workers in the exhibition was controlled firstly by the organizers who mediated their appearance in accordance with the narrative of labour exploitation they sought to create, and secondly by the exhibition visitors who were free to regard the participating workers on terms they chose. In contrast with Black's portrayal of capable and admirable women to illustrate the importance of allowing women to choose their own working practices in *Married Women's Work*, the exhibition relied on the representation of blackleg workers as dependent on the interference of other activists and the support of wealthier and more influential social groups to effect social change. This representation of powerlessness is in keeping with Black's opinion that a consumers' league could only be effective once

the workers were in a position to support it; the exhibition sought to demonstrate that the effects of blackleg work left workers unable to stand up for themselves.

The international market: conclusions

The involvement of middle-class and specifically female potential activists in campaigns to combat the conditions that produced blackleg work were central to Black's campaign writing from the beginning. She adapted her strategies for representing both blackleg workers and the possible influence that activists could exert in accordance with her specific campaign aims as well as her changing perceptions of the markets in which blackleg work operated. Her experiments with consumer activism relied throughout on an implied assumption of interest and concern in the reader, and she responded to this concern by offering an activist channel for consumers' impulses towards social change. Her representation of the proximity of the consumer to the worker and the consequent influence the consumer could personally exert, however, developed according to her understanding of market relations.

Alfred G. Gardiner, the editor of the *Daily News* who chaired the executive committee of the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' and went on to become the chair of the Anti-Sweating League, contributed an introduction to *Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage*. His opening lines gave a good sense of how Black and her fellow activists for a minimum wage understood the problem of sweating by the first decade of the twentieth century. He stated:

> The sweating evil has long engaged the attention of social and industrial workers in many fields. Some have approached it from the philanthropic point of view, and have sought a remedy in voluntary means such as consumers' leagues; others have approached it from the point of view of industrial organisation, and have sought to deal with it by the extension of trade unionism and legislative action. So far all efforts alike have been futile. The evil is too widespread and too remote in its operations to be touched by charity. It involves a class too forlorn, too isolated, and too impoverished to be reached by trade unionism. The cry of the victims has

> hitherto been too feeble and hopeless to command the attention of Parliament.[103]

This passage addressed a variety of campaigns that both Black and Harkness supported in the final decades of the nineteenth century, but suggested that a combination of research and increased awareness of the nature of the problem, and perhaps developments within the economic system itself, had made clear that solutions limited to specific movements, whether philanthropy or trade unionism, could not be strong enough to combat the problem of sweating in the twentieth century. In the simplified version of market relations Black put forward in 'Caveat Emptor', she suggested that the distance between producer and consumer of specific goods was small enough for the consumer to be able to trace the provenance of their purchases. The circumstances reflected in the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition', however, gave a sense of complex production processes that required a national, legal solution. The idea that consumers could, as she had suggested in 'The Morality of Buying in the Cheapest Market', simply imagine themselves into the position of blackleg workers was no longer applicable. Instead, the exhibition's promise to show to consumers working conditions that were rendered invisible by the production process seemed a more accurate reflection of the growing distance between the experience of the worker and consumer. On the other hand, this distance meant that visitors to the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' could be motivated by voyeurism and mere curiosity about the conditions of working poverty as well as by legitimate concern for the workers' welfare.

Gardiner's summary also illustrates two crucial themes addressed in this thesis, viz. the complexity of the sweating system and the socio-economic position of the sweated workers themselves. His description of the sweating system as 'widespread' and 'remote in its operations' corroborated Beatrice Potter's assertion in her evidence to the Lords Select Committee on Sweating that it could not be condensed into the single

[103] A. G. Gardiner, 'Introduction', in Black, *Sweated Industry*, pp. ix–xxiv (p. ix).

demonized figure of the sweater.[104] The use of sweated work was economically entrenched and, as Black pointed out in *Sweated Industry*, the fragmented nature of production made the problem difficult to pin down. The sense of the system as 'remote in its operations' also underlined the importance of 'long-distance solidarity' as consumers' alienation from the production process was increased. What remained from earlier understandings of the sweating system, however, was the sense of the workers as victims, too 'feeble and hopeless' to stand up for themselves — in other words, as blacklegs to their own cause. While the perception of the sweating system had developed from the narrative of consumer guilt common in the nineteenth century, the perception of the victims of sweating did not appear to have changed significantly.

Black's engagement with narratives of consumer activism illustrates a central problem in both her and Harkness's representations of blackleg workers: the search for a balance in representing a social problem in such a way as would be likely to engage an audience of middle-class consumer-readers in activism, while still allowing that the workers portrayed as victims of the problem had individual identities. Black's arguments both for and against a consumers' league, and her support for the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition' in spite of her emphasis elsewhere on the personhood of sweated workers, all reflect a pull between attempts to enlighten the ignorance of her readers through argument, and to spur them to action through emotive appeals.

Black took a proactive approach to the failure of the plans she forged in the nineteenth century, characteristically continuing to re-evaluate her ideas and devise new schemes. By the twentieth century, she had determined that the underlying issue in many of the problems she addressed was the low rate of wages, and in *Sweated Industry* she set out an economic argument against underpayment as not conducive to the development either of the national or global economy or of humanity itself. This

[104] See David Glover, *Literature, Immigration, and Diaspora in Fin-de-Siècle England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 74.

argument was summed up in her remark that '[f]rom a national point of view it would pay better to save the human machine from falling into that state of disrepair wherein it ceases to be profitable'.[105] *Sweated Industry* made clear that the direct link between prices paid for goods and wages paid to the producer was imaginary, as production was fragmented, meaning that the producer of one element of the final product was probably paid at completely different rates to another, and there was no guarantee whatsoever that expensive goods did not incorporate the products of blackleg labour. For this reason, Black argued, the 'cure of underpayment needs to be applied at the point of payment; and the establishment of a legal minimum wage is the most direct method of application'.[106] Underpayment was linked to the undervaluing of the work, and consequently the worker — but this undervaluing was not a direct result of bargain-hunting or consumer habits.

The growth of a global economy was held to be an exacerbating factor in consumers' alienation from the production process of the goods they bought, and from the workers who produced these goods. The introduction of cheap imported goods meant that workers were obliged to compete internationally, meaning that the amount of blackleg work was significantly increased. Both Black and Harkness engaged, whether intentionally or not, in another form of international blackleg work centred on the exportation and adaptation of campaign strategies. They adopted ideas from abroad and repurposed them according to their own agendas, and in turn their ideas were translated to fit the priorities of different campaign groups, and these translations could change significantly from the original idea. In the case of the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition', Black became complicit in an event that objectified individual workers as a basis from which to launch her campaign for a minimum wage. In this way, the blackleg writers themselves could be seen as blackleg producers of goods that undermined the

[105] Black, *Sweated Industry*, p. 18.
[106] Black, *Sweated Industry*, p. 210.

organization of workers for their own rights. Like sweated workers, they lost control over the products of their labour, or engaged in practices potentially damaging to other workers; like employers bringing cheap goods into the global market, the products they sold in the international market had their own moral context. While the translation of campaign aims and strategies within a global market that produced comparable problems of labour exploitation worldwide relied on a concept of long-distance solidarity, the representative strategies that underpinned this could sometimes end by giving insufficient attention to the workers with whom activists professed solidarity. In their published writings, both Black and Harkness pointed to the importance of bridging the personal, emotional, and moral distance between activists and exploited workers: novels like *An Agitator* and *George Eastmont, Wanderer* showed that a lack of personal connection with the working poor undermined the activist work in the labour movement of the protagonists Kit Brand and George Eastmont. Whether they were conscious of it or not, however, their own work sometimes ended by reinforcing the distance between workers, consumers, and activists.

In both of the case studies addressed in Part II of this thesis, the introduction of a world problem was accompanied by a distancing act in one way or another. In the translations of Harkness's work, the emphasis on the foreignness of the texts reduced the appeal to combat the conditions described. In exhibitions of sweated labour, the exhibition setting objectified the people on display and failed to collapse the personal distance between them and the exhibition visitors. While the representative strategies of these projects had a far reach, then, in practice long-distance solidarity generally meant that the distance between the blackleg worker and the potential activist was preserved.

Conclusion.

The Blackleg Writer: Afterlives and Futures

In 1890, Harkness had told her interviewer for the *Evening News and Post*, in response to a question about the 'gloomy' nature of her novels on slum conditions:

> Some have said, 'Why write about the subject at all? Why lift the veil from such conditions and show them to the world? They cannot be helped.' My answer has been, because I wish to see if some good cannot be done — because I think the conscience of the nation ought to be aroused? [*sic*][1]

This simple exchange encapsulates many of the key concepts ascribed to the work and aims of both Harkness and Black throughout this thesis. The aim of awakening a moral public conscience and consciousness was explicitly stated by both writers at various points in their careers. The process of 'lifting a veil' from the reality of poverty to promote middle-class readers' moral engagement could be engineered in either order, consciousness following conscience or vice versa. Narrative representations in the form of fiction or anecdotes in social investigation could be used to bridge the moral and emotional distance between readers and the working poor, and consciousness of a social problem would proceed from pangs of conscience about the existence of these conditions. Facts and figures, on the other hand, could enhance readers' understanding of the problem, and their conscience would then motivate them to take action. In either case, these author-activists took upon themselves the role of translator of the subject matter for their readers, and mediator of their consciousness and impulses of conscience. They decided what aspects of poverty conditions they would reveal to their readers, and through which publishing platform and genre. Frequently, they also posited and promoted their own solutions to the social problems they described, to channel their readers' potential for activism into particular directions.

[1] 'A Slum-Story Writer', *Evening News and Post*, 17 April 1890, p. 2.

These were not new strategies: late nineteenth-century attempts to bring urban poverty to the attention of a middle-class readership, through fiction, social investigation, and campaign writing, have been well documented.[2] In fact, both Harkness and Black saw themselves as participating in this range of contemporary discourses. Harkness intended *A City Girl* as a deliberate response to Walter Besant's novels on life in the East End of London, and she participated publicly in political and ideological debate through letters to the editors of numerous different periodicals. Black reviewed social investigation texts and repeatedly explained her developing political and economic priorities through non-fiction publications and articles.

This thesis has argued that the work of Black and Harkness stands out in these debates, and has claimed that their publications should be regarded as a counter-canon to contemporary writing about working poor people. This claim rests on Black's and Harkness's identity as blackleg writers who combined their own literary production with activist initiatives to improve the position of the blackleg workers who were the main subject of both strands of their work. Their publications therefore shed light simultaneously on the poverty conditions they encountered and tried to describe, on their own changing views and priorities on how these conditions could be ameliorated, and on their roles both as dependent on the literary market and as participants in activist discourses and projects. Their knowledge of and access to mainstream publishing platforms meant that their writing reflected their strategies in drawing readers into different forms of activism, often working alongside or outside organized politics. Their work shows a balance between providing an insight into the experience of poverty and irregular employment — their own as well as that of the blackleg workers whose living

[2] See, for instance, Peter Keating's anthology of nineteenth-century writing on poverty, *Into Unknown England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), Seth Koven's study *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), and Ruth Livesey's work on the Charity Organization Society, 'Reading for Character: Women Social Reformers and Narratives of the Urban Poor in Late Victorian and Edwardian London', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 9.1 (2004), 43–67 <https://doi.org/10.3366/jvc.2004.9.1.43>.

and working conditions they described — and translating activist discourses and initiatives for a mainstream readership.

This conclusion explores the notion of afterlives, a concept that has been present throughout this thesis. Part I explored the two authors' developing ideas and priorities, and Part II considered how their work was repurposed to support campaigns that sometimes seemed to go against their own strategies and aims. This conclusion gives further thought to the forward reach of the changing approaches to activism that this thesis has examined through the work of Harkness and Black, and the social problems that produced these responses. It considers the lack of a canonical afterlife for Black's and Harkness's own work, but suggests that the investigative and representative strategies they developed in their careers as author-activists were adopted, adapted, and repurposed by new generations of writers and reformers. Brief examinations of the work of two twentieth-century activist writers demonstrate how the activist identity of the blackleg writer and the independent investigator evolved into voices that set out to influence government policy and even structures of government.

With reference to a number of key concepts from this thesis, including the perceived economic, cultural, and historical value of blackleg work in literature, the representation of underrepresented groups, and the development and evaluation of campaign writing and its anchorage in its temporal moment, this conclusion illustrates the continued importance of two author-activists whose work, while it was deeply embedded in its historical moment, was also ahead of its time in many ways.

The evolution of the blackleg canon

Both Black and Harkness appeared to lose their place in central socio-political debates in the early twentieth century. Harkness had left Britain semi-permanently in the mid-1890s, and although her work was still published in Britain, she no longer took part in

debates on political and social issues in the press. *George Eastmont, Wanderer* (1905) was a retrospective on a political career; her later work, including *The Horoscope* (1914) and *A Curate's Promise* (1921), received few reviews, and awareness of her authorial identity appears to have faded. A favourable review of *The Horoscope* in the *Academy* does not mention John Law's previous work or reputation at all, while a notice of *A Curate's Promise* in the *Publishers' Circular* makes no attempt to link this story about the Salvation Army in the East End of London to John Law's earlier work on the subject.[3] Although Black was still actively involved in the campaign for a minimum wage up to the First World War, and published her last novel, *Caroline*, in 1908, she published little further work after *A New Way of Housekeeping* (1918), and by 1921 even her most energetic well-wishers described her novels as 'nearly forgotten'.[4]

Both Harkness and Black, in their publications during and immediately after the First World War, still showed a strong understanding of, and ability to respond to and comment on, contemporary realities from colonial Ceylon to war-time Britain. *The Horoscope* explored the experience of colonial rule from the point of view of a Buddhist land owner, and *A Curate's Promise* reflected the wartime work of the Salvation Army in detail and with urgency. During the war, Black published an intriguingly-titled but unfortunately untraceable text entitled *Norwegian Haybox Cookery*; Glage indicates that, according to Black's nephew David Garnett, it contained 'suggestions towards economic, energy saving, cooking' during wartime rationing.[5] *A New Way of Housekeeping* clearly reflected a willingness to take advantage of a time of social upheaval to shape a more efficient society. All of these texts, then, sought to respond and often to provide practical solutions to contemporary social problems.

[3] '*The Horoscope*', *Academy*, 14 February 1914, p. 203, and 'Notices of Books', *Publishers' Circular and Booksellers' Record*, 3 September 1921, p. 222.
[4] London, British Library, Royal Literary Fund archive, Loan 96 RLF 1/3136/5, G. P. Gooch to the Royal Literary Fund, December 1921.
[5] This title is included in Liselotte Glage's list of Black's publications as probably published in 1916. Glage, *Clementina Black: A Study in Social History and Literature* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1981), p. 191. Garnett's description of the text appears in Glage, p. 66.

Nevertheless, public awareness of Harkness's and Black's work and reputations appears to have slackened after the peaks in their publishing careers in Britain.

The lack of longevity for the prolific work of both author-activists was due precisely to their status as blackleg writers. Produced in large quantities for the market, their work necessarily reflected its historical moment, responding to contemporary debates and incorporating the popular literary styles of the day. Later in their careers, they did not lose the ability to comment intelligently on the contemporary, but their productivity levels declined, which may have been largely responsible for the loss of their professional reputations. Their individual publications were so rooted in the contemporary that they were not canonized by a changing society; and as their names no longer appeared in a range of papers at regular intervals, their professional identities were forgotten as well. The lack of economic value ascribed to the work of Black and Harkness by the contemporary literary market had originally driven up their production levels to enable them to live by their pen. In the early years of the twentieth century, their work was considered to be losing its cultural value, as the social, political, and economic situation on which they had commented and which they had tried to reflect was changing. This conclusion argues, however, that their work has greater historical value than has hitherto been widely acknowledged.

This thesis has explored Black's and Harkness's ability, as prolific blackleg writers, to engage with consumer-readers and to see them as potential activists whose conscience and consciousness could be aroused through literature. Throughout, their work shows evidence of pushing the boundaries of convention, subverting their readers' expectations in small-scale ways, and aiming for goals they considered to be achievable, motivating their readers to participate in accessible, often non-political activism. In by-passing the political discourses of better-remembered texts, the work of Harkness and Black gives an insight into the contemporary literary market for activist writing that

provides valuable material to critics and historians seeking to understand a broader, more mainstream response to activism around the turn of the twentieth century. In addition, in participating in wider discourses around research and writing about working poor people, both Black and Harkness pioneered techniques of researching and writing that went on to be developed by journalists and investigators in the interbellum period and even after the Second World War.

The different implications of the blackleg identity discussed in this thesis retained their relevance in the twentieth century. In her autobiography *Journey from the North* (1969), journalist and novelist Storm Jameson described how she and the circle of writers and intellectuals in which she moved in London were motivated to protest in the 1930s almost as a matter of course. In Jameson's words: 'The twenties, for all their disorder, were lively with ideas, dreams, hopes, experiments.' By contrast, 'roughly at the end of the feverishly energetic twenties — […] the moral and intellectual climate changed', and 'writers found themselves being summoned on to platforms and into committee-rooms to defend society against its enemies'.[6] Jameson explained:

> The impulse that turned so many of us into pamphleteers and amateur politicians was neither mean nor trivial. The evil we were told off to fight was really evil, the threat to human decency a real threat. I doubt whether any of us believed that books would be burned in England, or eminent English scholars, scientists, writers, forced to beg hospitality in some other country. Or that, like Lorca, we might be murdered. Or tortured and then killed in concentration camps. But all these things were happening abroad, and intellectuals who refused to protest were in effect blacklegs.[7]

Jameson's reference to blacklegs here suggests that the term still held broad implications of treachery to a cause and social group: indifference to the plight of fellow intellectuals abroad would be a form of betrayal. She went on to make clear, however, that their protests were not directed solely against the rise of fascism and curtailment of intellectual freedom in other European countries. As the effects of the Great Depression

[6] Storm Jameson, *Autobiography of Storm Jameson: Journey from the North*, 2 vols (London: Virago, 1984 [first published 1969]), I, 292.
[7] Jameson, I, 292–93.

made themselves felt in mass unemployment, Jameson suggested that writers felt impelled to recognize the state of the country and the world in their writing. She stated:

> Where energy and salt have not been choked out of a society, the writer can breathe freely. In the thirties, millions of half-fed hopeless men, eating their hearts out, gave off a moral stench which became suffocating.
> There really was a stench. On one side Dachau, on the other the 'distressed areas' with their ashamed workless men and despairing women. Not many English writers had the hardness of heart, the frivolity, the religious certainty, the (why not?) noble egoism — noble or ignoble, the gesture is precisely the same — to hurry past, handkerchief to nose, intoning, 'My concern is with my art, what troubles are troubling the world are not my business; let those whose business it is attend to it, I must be about my own…'

The 'current dragging writers into active politics' in the 1930s that Jameson described reveals significant parallels with the agendas of author-activists Black and Harkness between the 1880s and the First World War.[8] During both periods, writers aimed to raise public awareness of the social conditions they observed, while also becoming personally involved with organizations formulating practical responses to social problems at home and abroad.

The combination of optimistic and even utopian 'ideas, hopes, dreams, experiments' that Jameson identified in the 1920s and the urgent and practical responses to observable contemporary problems are also recognizable from the careers of Black and Harkness. Black explored alternative roles for women in settings distanced from contemporary British society, such as the fictionalized past or the holiday atmosphere of foreign places; but the extent of her re-imagination of women's roles emerged from her radical rethinking of household management in *A New Way of Housekeeping*. The publication of this text at the close of the First World War indicates a belief that a new and better world could be shaped out of tragedy. Harkness's final novel, *A Curate's Promise*, expressed a comparable desire, though on a smaller scale, to rethink interclass and interpersonal relations in order to create a fairer society following the horrors of

[8] Jameson, I, 293.

war. Both Black and Harkness, then, closed their careers as author-activists on tentatively optimistic notes, hoping that the destruction of the society in which they had developed their activist practices would allow for the construction of new and better social structures.

While this better society did not emerge, as Britain and other countries descended instead into economic depression followed by another world war, Jameson showed that the identity of author-activist was carried forward and developed in the 1920s and 30s. Writers continued to use their published work to call attention to social problems and to lend their names and support to activist projects, often with an international reach. The strategies developed by Black and Harkness as social investigators publishing their discoveries would also prove influential, as the 1920s and 30s saw female journalists and investigators gathering information from international sources in order to put alternative social schemes and structures before their readers. Elizabeth Darling describes these female investigators as 'the heirs to several generations of primarily middle- and upper-middle-class women who, since at least the 1860s, had used the biological "given" of their gender's predisposition to nurturing as a springboard for political roles in their communities'.[9]

The examples of two female writer-researchers working after the First World War give a sense of how Black's and Harkness's activist practices, based on investigation and publication, were developed between the wars. Ada Jones Chesterton, an investigative journalist, and Elizabeth Denby, a 'housing consultant', employed research strategies comparable to those developed by Harkness and Black, and also embraced the same form of internationally-orientated research, searching for and

[9] Elizabeth Darling, 'Introduction', in Elizabeth Denby, *Europe Rehoused* (London: Routledge, 2015 [Denby's report first published in 1938]), pp. vii–xxii (p. ix).

positing adaptable examples from other countries to improve contemporary Britain.[10] Where Harkness had independently undertaken international travel in order to improve her effectiveness as an activist in Britain, and Black had adopted and adapted campaign strategies and social schemes from abroad, in the 1930s Chesterton and Denby both undertook journeys of international investigation with the deliberate aim of influencing national policy with reference to social experiments that were actively conducted abroad. Harkness had ineffectually tried to introduce Berlin's *Dienstmänner* scheme to London, and reported on provisions made for destitute people and old-age pensioners in Vienna in hopes of setting an example to Britain; Black had used international precedents like the 1896 Albany Mercantile Act to propose changes to social provision and labour legislation in Britain. By the time Chesterton and Denby were writing, old social orders were being deliberately overturned, and new systems of government were implemented in the USSR and Germany — although Jameson's comments show that these new regimes were quickly recognized as violent, repressive, and exploitative and were publicly condemned by activists and intellectuals. In this global context, ambitious schemes for social reform were no longer limited to idealistic colonies of labour such as that established by the Fellowship of the New Life, or the work colonies founded by the Salvation Army that Harkness visited at the end of the nineteenth century.[11] Instead, the international investigation of individuals and the publications of blackleg author-activists now had a genuine chance of being repurposed to impact on government policy.

[10] Elizabeth Darling uses the term 'housing consultant' to describe Denby in '"The Star in the Profession She Invented for Herself": A Brief Biography of Elizabeth Denby, Housing Consultant', *Planning Perspectives*, 20 (2005), 271–300.

[11] George Bernard Shaw recorded a planned visit to 'the Booth Colony at Benfleet [the Salvation Army-run Hadleigh Farm] with Miss Harkness, Tom Mann, the Stepniaks, etc.' on 2 April 1892. Bernard Shaw, *The Diaries*, ed. by Stanley Weintraub, 2 vols (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986), II, 809.

The twentieth-century author-activist: Elizabeth Denby and Ada Jones Chesterton

Denby and Chesterton both developed author-activist identities rooted in the work carried out by Black, Harkness, and their contemporaries prior to the First World War. Both relied on publishing to make a name for themselves, so that their opinions and ideas on social questions would be sure of a platform and a readership, and would be taken seriously. For both, independent investigations were at the heart of their publications on social subjects.

Ada Jones, who would go on to publish her post-WWI investigative work under her married name, Mrs Cecil Chesterton, had begun to work as a blackleg writer around the time of the peaks in the publishing careers of Harkness and Black in the mid- to late-1880s. Writing under various pseudonyms and in a range of genres, she published articles, novels, and volumes of poetry. She had access to a similar political milieu to that in which Black and Harkness were active in the 1880s and 1890s; in *The Chestertons* (1941), her joint biography of her brother-in-law and husband, G. K. and Cecil Chesterton, she described attending meetings of the Fabian Society and the Social Democratic Federation with the Chesterton brothers, often heckling the speakers.[12] Her own training in campaigning journalism derived from her work as assistant editor of the *New Witness*, edited by Cecil.[13] Like Black and Harkness, Chesterton used her experience of writing for the market and her access to popular publishing platforms to represent social problems for the consumption of a mainstream readership. Through her own campaigns, such as her Cecil Houses initiative to provide affordable accommodation to homeless women and working women on low incomes, she also

[12] Mrs Cecil [Ada Jones] Chesterton, *The Chestertons* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1941), pp. 13, 15.
[13] Chesterton, *The Chestertons*, p. 113.

mediated her readers' response of conscience, offering them a channel for their activist impulses.[14]

If Chesterton was the twentieth-century incarnation of the blackleg writer as activist, embracing a shock-and-shame approach not far from Harkness's slum stories and the visual appeal of the 'Sweated Industries Exhibition', Denby may be seen as a researcher in the mould of the Women's Industrial Council. Her career, which carried her from a degree in social work via professional work for a society for social reform to become an independent housing consultant, reflects the professionalization of the investigation of social problems with a view to shaping policy. Darling casts Denby as heir to a 'tradition of influential space-makers which began with Octavia Hill and Henrietta Barnett'.[15] Denby had trained for a career in social work during the final years of the First World War.[16] Housing became a particular concern for her when she began to work for the Kensington Council of Social Service in the 1920s.[17] Having established a reputation as an authority on housing as a social problem, she began her career as an independent housing consultant in 1933.[18] In 1934 she was one of the founders of the Housing Centre, 'a professional think tank and lobby organisation for progressive views on housing'.[19] Her regular publications on the subject meant that, over the course of the 1930s, she was able to develop 'a voice that was respected and listened to'.[20] Darling notes that women's voluntary work in the provision of social welfare in the nineteenth century had created 'a context in which it was entirely normal for women to be at the

[14] The 'Editor's Note' to *Women of the London Underworld* described Cecil Houses as a success, with five houses open in central London by 1938, and encouraged readers moved by the text to subscribe to 'Mrs. Cecil Chesterton's Public Lodging House Fund'. 'The Editor', 'Editor's Note', in Mrs Cecil Chesterton, *Women of the London Underworld* (London: Readers' Library Publishing Co., 1938), pp. 5–6 (p. 6). The charity, renamed the Central and Cecil Housing Trust, now provides homes and services for vulnerable elderly people. See 'About Us', *C&C* <https://www.ccht.org.uk/about-us> [accessed 4 May 2017].
[15] Darling, 'The Star', p. 274.
[16] Darling, in Denby, p. x.
[17] Darling, 'The Star', p. 276
[18] Darling, 'The Star', p. 280.
[19] Darling, in Denby, p. xi.
[20] Darling, in Denby, p. xiii.

helm of reform', and this was the context in which Denby was able to develop her role as housing consultant, using the 'vast body of knowledge about social conditions amongst London's poor, the economics and problems of re-housing and the techniques of research and propaganda' that she had gathered over the ten years she had worked at Kensington Council.[21] Denby, then, was able to produce a professional approach to the forms of social investigation that had been the province of independent, often female, researchers like Black and other members of the WIC. Amassing information and presenting this both to the public and to influential bodies and individuals, she awakened a consciousness of the social problem of housing provision, and offered solutions based on her expertise.

Denby is best remembered for her seminal text *Europe Rehoused* (1938), a report on housing provision across a continent that shared the problem of a shortage of accommodation for working people, intensified by the First World War. Her research took her to Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, but the text limited itself to examples from Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Italy, and France.[22] The official nature of the inquiry, in contrast to the independent research of Harkness and Black, is reflected by the fact that it was funded by the Leverhulme Trust.[23] Denby explicitly situated her own work in a tradition of social investigation, and deliberately set out to repurpose successful schemes from other countries for use in Britain. Evoking the same terminology as Harkness and Black in their efforts to present social problems to a mainstream readership, she stated that 'the public conscience had by 1890 begun to stir uneasily, and by 1914 a very lively interest was being taken in housing matters'.[24] Before this public concern and interest could be put to public use, however, war

[21] Darling, 'The Star', pp. 275, 276.
[22] Denby, p. 11.
[23] Darling, in Denby, p. xiii.
[24] Denby, p. 28.

intervened and 'intensified the housing problem not only by the interruption of all building for four years, but by increasing the cost of materials, labour, land and money when the War was over'.[25] Based on this, Denby asked: 'Is it surprising that, in 1918, low-cost housing was regarded as the concern of Governments, and not of private individuals?'[26] Thus, Denby charted the progression that had begun during campaigns like Black's: social problems that had been made a public concern in part through the intervention and mediation of independent investigators and activists, who had gradually come to call for legislative change to combat them, were now acknowledged as problems for which the state carried responsibility.

In the text, Denby showed herself to be conscious of the longer history of a form of back-and-forth repurposing of social schemes across borders. She stated that '[s]ome of the best housing estates built on the Continent before 1914 were attributed to the influence of th[e] English ideal' of the garden city. These ideals had arrived in continental Europe, she explained, through a process of mediation and translation, as '[a] book by Dr. Mattesius, of Berlin, in which he commuted these ideals into a form suitable for Continental use […], was translated into Swedish, Dutch and other languages and was widely studied abroad'.[27] The housing constructed according to these adapted ideas was now being studied by Denby in order to inform a future British housing policy.

Housing was also one of Chesterton's particular concerns, but while she made a point of researching conditions of housing and homelessness in the countries she visited and published on, her work over the course of the 1930s became increasingly concerned with the potential of different systems of government to address social problems of long standing. While Black and Harkness had tried to conceive of ways in which society

[25] Denby, pp. 28–29.
[26] Denby, p. 29.
[27] Denby, p. 132.

might be reshaped and improved following the First World War, authors like Chesterton exposed the fact that the social problems of the nineteenth century had not been resolved after the war. Chesterton's first undercover investigation, into the experience of homeless women in London, was initially published as a series of articles in the *Sunday Express* in 1925. A book followed in 1926; its title, *In Darkest London*, clearly evoked the discourse of late nineteenth-century campaign writing.[28] She carried forward this strand of her career, publishing campaign texts based on her experience of poverty and destitution in London. While her publications had an eye to sensationalism throughout, she used this to expose serious social questions, such as the ongoing problem of slum housing, which she addressed in *I Lived in a Slum* (1936), and the effects of economic depression on young people in *What Price Youth?* (1939).

During the Interbellum, Chesterton undertook journeys to Japan, China, Nazi Germany, Austria prior to the Anschluss, Hungary, and the USSR. Where possible, she tried to explore social problems in these countries that were comparable to those on which she had published in Britain, and actively engaged in comparisons of the policies pursued by different governments. Unlike Jameson, who recognized and described the changes in governments abroad as dangerous, Chesterton used international examples including repressive regimes to argue that the economic problems Britain was facing were not inevitable, and to provide possible examples for alternative policies. In *Sickle or Swastika?* (1935), she described the strain on the capitalist system as untenable and the system itself as unethical, and expressed her conviction of the need to investigate alternatives. She stated:

> The most convinced supporter of Capitalism to-day must admit that there is something faulty in a system that postulates a percentage of permanent unemployment and a periodical destruction of what is called 'surplus' wealth — wheat, coffee, etc., in order to retain its markets.[29]

[28] Mrs Cecil Chesterton, *In Darkest London* (London: Paul, 1926).
[29] Mrs Cecil Chesterton, *Sickle or Swastika?* (London: Paul, n.d. [1935]), p. 7.

The book went on, through accounts of her journeys to Germany, Austria, Hungary, and the USSR, to set out her aim of investigating two other systems of government: fascism and what she calls 'Collectivism', or Soviet-style communism.

While she admitted, having visited Nazi Germany, to feeling alienated by the effects of the 'dope' of propaganda and the 'frenzied acclamation' of Adolf Hitler, she saw as crucial the impact of National Socialist policy on reducing unemployment — a social problem that caused her great concern in Britain.[30] In *What Price Youth?* she would go on to write: 'Unemployment stamps out originality of thought, audacity of action.'[31] Although her accounts of Nazi Germany referred to some evidence of state-sanctioned and state-organized violence and repression, she did not acknowledge nearly its full extent at this time, choosing to report instead on what she believed to be the National Socialist approach to combating unemployment. In 1935 she stated that, although Hitler 'never seriously diminished the percentage of unemployed, the majority having been put to occupational rather than productive work', the absence of widespread and visible unemployment led to 'a miraculous spiritual regeneration' — an obvious and serious misrepresentation that does not acknowledge the regime's systemic discrimination and violence against many social groups.[32] By 1939 Chesterton had become more dubious of Hitler's policies against unemployment; in *What Price Youth?* she noted that Hitler had not in fact reduced unemployment. Again, however, she failed to acknowledge the use of violence, forced labour, and internment in camps that propped up Nazi rule. Instead, she attributed the following explanation to 'an intelligent young student […], newly returned from Germany':

> Big employers of labour are forbidden to sack any one of Aryan blood. When slack times come along, and there are not enough orders to keep the place open, the work is spread out very thin, and the wages are to

[30] Chesterton, *Sickle or Swastika?*, pp. 20, 26.
[31] Mrs Cecil Chesterton, *What Price Youth?* (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1939), p. 21.
[32] Chesterton, *Sickle or Swastika?*, pp. 17–18.

> match. This keeps up employment figures, and no one outside the country knows what is happening.[33]

Chesterton, then, did give up her earlier idea that the Hitler regime was successfully combating unemployment. While she claimed that she was exposing employment practices that 'no one outside the country' knew about, however, accounts like Jameson's show that, by this time, it was known or suspected in Britain and other countries that the Nazi regime had constructed concentration camps and implemented the systematic use of slave labour, torture, and murder.

Chesterton's praise for the USSR was significantly more enthusiastic and even less tempered with concern about state repression or violence. It remained based on a similar train of thought regarding the social and emotional, as well as economic, impact of long-term unemployment. She wrote that, at the border of the USSR, '[u]nemployment, with its inevitable depression, lack of security, spiritual ennui, the dry-rot of hopelessness symptomatic of Europe to-day, falls behind. One meets an atmosphere charged with purpose and vitality.'[34] Chesterton's enthusiasm for the USSR continued to grow, and in 1942 she published a volume entitled *Salute the Soviet*, which drew on her experiences of a visit to the USSR in 1939. Among other things, she emphasized the need for Britain to follow the Soviet example in providing adequate childcare to free women for work, and for the war effort in particular — a proposal in some ways reminiscent of Black's suggestions for collective housekeeping.[35]

Chesterton's arguments in *Sickle or Swastika?* and *Salute the Soviet* were informed by the experience of the First World War, and the opportunities for social change that failed to materialize after it. In 1942, she pleaded for change, as Black and Harkness had done after WWI. She wrote about the 'apprehension that when the war is over we shall be faced in this country [Britain] with a peace fraught with the perils of

[33] Chesterton, *What Price Youth?*, p. 23
[34] Chesterton, *Sickle or Swastika?*, p. 175.
[35] Mrs Cecil Chesterton, *Salute the Soviet* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1942), p. 207.

unemployment, slums, frustration and insecurity': all the social problems that Britain had failed to resolve after the First World War. She stated: 'I doubt if any but a very small percentage of our population — propertied, professional and proletarian — are satisfied with the present state of things, and I should say the majority would like to remedy its worst concomitants'.[36] Thus, Chesterton may be seen as taking on the arguments regarding public consciousness that both Harkness and Black had made, but she used them to suggest reforms based on a Soviet example. Her accounts of her international social investigations largely failed to acknowledge the use of concentration camps and gulags by the regimes she wrote about, however. In the hands of authors like Chesterton, the counter-canon of the blackleg took on sweeping political proportions, advocating the radical reshaping of society by allying itself with new systems of government. The concern she felt about social and economic problems in Britain led her to explore and support political extremes.

The afterlife of the blackleg writer

The strategies of investigation and communication that developed out of the work of author-activists like Harkness and Black reach into the present day, and many of the debates and discourses in which they participated still resonate. Investigative journalists still undertake undercover investigations in the style of Ada Chesterton's, living in modern-day working poverty: examples from the twenty-first century include *Below the Breadline: Living on the Minimum Wage* (2002) by Fran Abrams and *Hard Work: Life in Low-Pay Britain* (2003) by Polly Toynbee. The kind of work carried out by organizations such as the Women's Industrial Council is now undertaken by government bodies, charities, and think-tanks, but issues such as a minimum and a living wage, overwork and underpayment, and poor, uncertain, and even perilous living

[36] Chesterton, *Salute the Soviet*, p. 213.

and working conditions are still current.[37] The work of activists like Black and Harkness has helped to make these issues the province not merely of independent investigators and a sympathetic reading public, but has made them public and political problems to be resolved through changes to legislation and its enforcement.

The methods, ideas, and representations embraced and espoused by Harkness and Black are at times troubling, particularly to modern-day readers: viz. Harkness's use of terms like 'scum' and 'slummers' to describe people in abject poverty, and Black's willingness to tailor her descriptions of working women to the demands of middle-class readers and to use sweated workers as exhibits for the middle- and upper-class gaze. In other ways, however, they were far ahead of their time, recognizing the individuality and personhood of people in working poverty and claiming for them a political identity as well as the right to decent living and working conditions. As Emma Francis and Ellen F. Mappen argue with regard to Black, both writers also found ways of representing the identities of woman workers that applied both to themselves and to the blackleg workers whose conditions they described.[38] Their personal situations illustrate the access women had to the literary market, to paid labour, and to political influence; their publications reflect their ways of circumnavigating the barriers that prevented them from developing the same public identities as political and literary men.

The tradition and discourses within which Black and Harkness worked had a long forward reach, covering a wide range of genres and campaigns. Although there was no longevity or canonization for their own work in the twentieth century, this thesis has argued that it is their very role as blackleg writers that lends value to their oeuvres.

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[37] See, for instance, the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee's report *Self-Employment and the Gig Economy*, HC847, published on 1 May 2017 by authority of the House of Commons <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmworpen/847/847.pdf> [accessed 3 May 2017].

[38] Emma Francis, 'Why wasn't Amy Levy More of a Socialist? Levy, Clementina Black and Liza of Lambeth', in *Amy Levy: Critical Essays*, ed. by Naomi Hetherington and Nadia Valman (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), pp. 47–69 (p. 54), and Ellen F. Mappen, 'Introduction', in *Married Women's Work*, ed. by Clementina Black (London: Virago, 1983), pp. i–xv (p. xi).

Their ability to write for the literary market and their understanding of what Black called the conventional reader ensure that their work reflects a detailed portrait of the role of activism in middle-class and middle-brow reading and consciousness. Author-activists like Harkness and Black were thus able to push for progress within the bounds of convention, introducing new ideas into conventional reading material.

The productivity of the blackleg writer and their ability to publish their work through a wide range of public platforms meant that their voices formed a substantial part of the contemporary debates on public issues and social problems. Black's address to the 'Literary Ladies' dinner indicated that the blackleg writer was a common presence in the literary market, and that their voices filled mainstream literature. The development of the strategies blackleg writer-workers and author-activists employed meant that they continue to be influential up to the present day, as is indicated by the work of writers like Chesterton and Denby in the twentieth century, and even Abrams and Toynbee in the twenty-first. The undervalued work of the blackleg writer should therefore be acknowledged for its historical and cultural worth.

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Appendix.

Foreign Currencies

The table below shows exchange rates in 1890 for the foreign currencies referred to in this thesis. Exchange rates are taken from Hermann Schmidt, *Tate's Modern Cambist* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1890).

Country	**Currency unit**	**Subunit**	**Exchange rate for £1**
Austria	Gulden or florin (Fl)	Kreuzer (Kr)	11.75 Fl
France	Franc (F)	Centime (c)	25.20 F
Germany	Mark (M)	Pfennig (Pf)	20.40 M
Netherlands	Gulden (*f*)	Cent (c)	12.05 *f*